In Zanzibar

Ralph D. Paine

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BY

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I

MARTIN DONNELLY called it a 'jinx.' By this he meant the sequence of episodes in which he was luridly unfortunate. His belief that virtue is its own reward was shaken. And yet, in the end, he won both fame and fortune as a proper hero should. That night in Zanzibar, so burdened with consequences, so prodigal of valor, so curiously entangled with the destinies of an ebony elephant and a phantom lady, with the one-eyed Arab shipmaster and the benevolent lion, was, in a way, the climax.

Other naval wanderers besides the rugged Donnelly were involved. You will understand them better if they introduce themselves somewhat earlier, before the ship drops anchor in the blue harbor of Zanzibar — susceptible young William Sprague, seaman, second class, and Mr. Cassius Stackpole, chief pay clerk, who sighed because middle-age had overtaken him and life had lost its flavor.

II

HAVE you ever heard of Djibuti? It is the little city of French Somaliland that clings to the edge of an African desert where the Gulf of Aden shimmers in the glare of breathless days and the red sunsets paint it gorgeously. Djibuti is where one goes ashore if he desires to visit the ancient, unconquerable kingdom of Abyssinia whose feudal lords wage mighty wars among their mountains and no more than the echoes thereof come to the outside world. A race of Christian warriors from time immemorial, they carry the banners of Saint George and Saint Gabriel into battle or kiss the crucifix ere they charge in swirling squadrons of cavalry.

Here life runs much as when the slim, brown Balkis, Queen of Sheba, rode down from this her realm of Ethiopia with her opulent retinue, her ivory, apes, and peacocks, and the gold of Ophir, to make the acquaintance of the canny young Solomon, King of the Jews.

A railroad winds up from Djibuti, a three days' journey to the remote Abyssinian capital of Addis-Abeba, but tourists seldom find their way thither. These are creatures of habit, moving in ruts and following the crowd, wherefore certain nooks and corners of a primitive world are still unspoiled.

Roving very far from home on a voyage to the Indian Ocean, the scout cruiser *Toledo* was displaying her flag in ports never before visited by an Amer-

ican man-of-war. It was a sight to thrill the heart of a Yankee exile, if there had been such a one on the beach of Djibuti, this slim, gray ship of surpassing speed which possessed a grace and beauty denied the massive fighting machines of the battle fleet.

Her 'shake-down cruise,' they called it, the purpose of which was to tune up a new ship and to school a crew of five hundred officers and men in the intricate, exacting team-play of the modern naval service. Even in this age of turbine engines and all manner of amazing electrical devices, the landlubber must go to sea to become a sailor. King Neptune still rules his boisterous realm, and to be his lawful subject one should go rolling out to meet all weathers as it was in the days of topsail yards, straining shrouds, and the winds that blew the ships along.

The *Toledo* swarmed with active youngsters in white clothes while the quick notes of a bugle or the bird-like quaver of the boatswain's pipe called them from one routine task to another. Scrub and paint and polish, with inspections, gunnery drills, and battle stations in the day's work! To be slack in little things is to invite slackness in the chief essentials. Such is the eternal gospel of the Navy. In time of peace the competent commander thinks of little else than to be as ready as possible for the emergencies of war, no matter how remote these may be. Secluded and detached from the populace which pays the bills, the Navy lives its own strenuously absorbed existence afloat.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole was a man of long service and vast experience. He was at home in most of the Seven Seas. As the paymaster's assistant, he had fathomed the iniquities and could combat the extortions of ship-chandlers, fuel agents, dragomans, bumboats, money changers, and native markets. He was the veteran of the *Toledo's* supply office. As a linguist he could air a smattering of divers strange tongues. His aspect of matured wisdom, of familiarity with exotic climes and races, suggested a modern Ulysses in a white uniform with the shoulder straps of a warrant officer.

The social distinction between the wardroom and the 'warrant officers' country' of a naval vessel is not easy to convey to a layman. It is the difference between commissioned rank and the lack of it. The dignified, courteous Mr. Stackpole, for example, was unlikely to receive a card to a conventional French or British club in these African ports. Officially he was an enlisted man while the downy ensign fresh from the Naval Academy was officially a gentleman. By traditional usage, caste and discipline are interwoven in all military service.

A mellowed philosopher, the chief pay clerk was untroubled by an inferiority complex. He moved in his orbit of manifold responsibilities with no waste motion. It ruffled him a little that the godless youngsters of the crew called him 'Old Man' Stackpole. He was indeed guilty of having lived forty years. The sedentary habit of long office hours between decks, in a maze of paper work, had increased

his weight, but he still carried it well. He had an appearance of substantial composure. The urbane features were a trifle fleshy, reminding one of some judge or senator in a portrait gallery.

Behold him, then, stepping ashore to the stone causeway which extended far out across the coral reefs of the harbor of Djibuti. No one would have surmised that Somaliland was strange to him. His deportment indicated that he felt calmly confident of finding his way about. He was at home anywhere. From the water scrambled a flock of naked Somali urchins who had been swimming around the *Toledo* and diving for coins. They surrounded Mr. Stackpole, clamoring for backsheesh, but he waved them aside without impatience and bargained with the black driver of a rickety carriage. These two harangued each other in what passed for French. The dialogue became vehement. Just when violence seemed imminent, the Somali surrendered. With a grin, he agreed to transport Mr. Stackpole at his own price. Here was a foreigner who could not be cheated. It was unique.

Away rattled the decrepit hack while behind it trotted one of the urchins who had emerged from the sea. He could be distinguished from the others by curious streaks of brown in the kinky wool that covered his pate. This made him an oddity. The boy, who was perhaps a dozen years old, had an intelligent face. His nose was not flat nor his lips thick. Black as was the shiny skin, he was not to be mistaken for an African negro. In his blood, perhaps,

was the Arab strain that is found among the Somalis and in the Abyssinian lowlands. Burning sun and salt water might have bleached those brindled streaks in his wool or possibly they were a freak of heredity.

All this escaped the attention of Mr. Cassius Stackpole who was unaware that the persistent urchin trailed him in clouds of dust. First impressions of Djibuti were surprisingly agreeable. The buildings were of stone and concrete facing wide streets with small parks of bright flowers. Shops and cafés were shaded by long arcades that offered refuge from the glare. Obviously the modern creation of a colonial policy, the place had charm, touches of the agreeable. The French officials and merchants had endeavored to make their exile something more than endurable.

The native quarter was another story. An open square incredibly filthy was crowded with caravans come in from the desert to trade, ragged nomads, and grass huts, camels, goats, and donkeys. Their market shed was literally dark with buzzing curtains of flies. The chief pay clerk, who was a methodical if not an enthusiastic sightseer, felt squeamish and hastened on. He perceived the need of a chair at a little table in front of the Hôtel de France where the trees rustled in a breeze from the harbor.

A cooling drink, ice and soda and the ruddy hue of Dubonnet, was grateful. He reflected that France held fast to her coastwise strip of Somaliland as the gateway of the inland traffic. And some day Abys-

sinia might crumble. Then there would be a scramble for the pieces. That dirty native quarter, now — it was like the French in Algiers — the front yard spick-and-span, Paris in miniature — but when you climbed the hill to the Arab town — ugh! The English ruled with a broom in one hand, whether the natives liked it or not.

There presently appeared the skinny, bright-eyed urchin who had pursued Mr. Stackpole from the quay. He had acquired a little fan of woven grass, shaped like a flag. Solemnly he took his stand and waved the fan to refresh Mr. Stackpole's perspiring brow. He could not be driven away. This was his self-appointed task. Eager to be of service, he volunteered a shrill question or two:

'You allé pos'-offeece, M'sieu? Me show you. Buy baskeet? Très bien? Me' get cheap.'

At a near-by table sat a French naval officer, a lieutenant, by his gold sleeve-stripes. He was a thick-set, competent looking young man with a ruddy cheek and an engaging smile. The cosmopolitan Mr. Stackpole found no difficulty in opening a conversation. Politely he inquired:

'You are attached to the gunboat anchored astern of the *Toledo*, my lieutenant? A converted yacht, I take it.'

'Yes, the *Diane* once belonged to an American millionaire. She was purchased by our naval service during the War. It is a very tiresome patrol, this Gulf of Aden, my friend. Hot, and so little diversion.'

'A patrol?' asked Mr. Stackpole. 'You interest me. Mostly on this coast?'

'Entirely. We try to catch the sailing dhows that run slaves across to the Arabian ports. A few of the Arab traders are still active. They manage to smuggle some slaves out of Abyssinia, not many, but enough to make it a nuisance, I assure you. The dhows dodge in and out at night. They are the devil to find. Secret signals warn them when the *Diane* goes out on patrol. We have not had much luck.'

This entertained Mr. Stackpole, blasé as he was. He had taken it for granted that the slave trade, like piracy, had been wiped out. The lieutenant explained with a yawn that the Abyssinian Government was anxious to suppress the traffic in accordance with its promise to the League of Nations. The rascally Arabs, however, would run the risks as long as there was a market for their human merchandise.

He changed the subject. It bored him, as not in the least picaresque. Mere damned drudgery in the course of service on a foreign station! With a nod he indicated the black boy who continued to fan the chief pay clerk with tireless fidelity.

'I have talked with this youngster,' said the lieutenant. 'A precocious monkey. He is a Shoan, of the best fighting stock of Abyssinia. His father fled for his life at the end of the civil war between the armies of the Negus, Ras Mikael, and the Empress Zeoditou. It was a struggle for the throne of the great Menelik. This father of the boy may come dragging himself past the hotel at any moment. He

is crippled. One arm and one foot were cut off in battle. He sells the beautifully made Shoan baskets for a few francs each. After his wounds healed, his friends brought him and his family to the coast. His life was not safe in his own country. He had been a petty chief of some influence. I have heard him tell the story of the final onslaught of Dedjatch Tababa with thirty thousand troops against fifty thousand Shoans. Horsemen and foot soldiers were mingled in one tremendous mêlée. Rifles exploded like crackers, lances dipped their bloody points, scimitars thudded against raw-hide shields, men in chain-mail shirts rolled in the meadow grass, stabbing, choking each other, mad to kill.'

Mr. Cassius Stackpole turned in his chair to look at the brindled waif with the fan, an atom of humanity washed up by a tide of barbaric carnage. He gave the boy a handful of the Djibuti francs, stamped from tin. The youngster knelt to kiss his benefactor's hand. In his childish voice he repeated over and over again that he was the faithful servant of the big American officer. His name was Matheos, said he, and he would be waiting at the quay whenever his master came ashore.

'Matheos?' echoed the chief pay clerk.

'Many of them bear Biblical names,' explained the lieutenant. 'One of the generals in this recent civil war was Ras Gebri-Christos. Pardon me, but I must now return to the *Diane*. Will you be good enough to visit the gunboat and stay for luncheon?'

Mr. Stackpole had to decline. He had some other

errands in Djibuti. At his heels trotted little black Matheos, ready to ply his fan when the chief pay clerk tarried in the bank or the post-office. So fast and so far had those bare feet pattered that he was permitted to ride in the antique carriage when it toiled out on the causeway where a launch from the cruiser was waiting.

Two flippant young wardroom officers had been rambling about the town. They had noted the stately progress of Mr. Cassius Stackpole and his ebony retainer. It aroused their sense of humor. Although the chief pay clerk could not fairly be called a pompous man, a trace of bland self-importance did make a little black boy with a fan seem quite the proper thing. Nor did it escape the crew of the launch, including the freckled coxswain. They grinned behind Mr. Stackpole's broad back and decided that no liberty party would be complete unless they could each rate a black boy with a fan. This was true Oriental luxury, they were prepared to tell the cock-eyed world.

In the afternoon a bevy of these amphibious blackamoors swam out to the ship and yelled for coins. Heedless of sharks, they paddled and scrambled and dived hour after hour. The agile Matheos was conspicuously marked by those brown streaks in his wool. When Mr. Stackpole sauntered on deck after a sweltering session with the paymaster, his protégé raised a joyous shout of welcome.

The other warrant officers, including the chief boatswain, the electrical gunner, and the chief car-

penter, made comments ribald and unkind. Because of 'Old Man' Stackpole's respectable record in the service, they were reluctant to air a scandal, but he was always boasting of having been everywhere. Possibly he had visited Djibuti before and was trying to cover it up. That kid with the piebald thatch, now — but the virtuous Mr. Stackpole seemed so upset by these wicked slurs that his friends refrained from teasing him.

Sensitive to ridicule, he vowed to himself that he would parade the town no more with little Matheos and his fan. He would tell the boy to make himself scarce. It was too late, however, to smother the senseless joke. It would be passed along among the five hundred men of the cruiser, from the navigating bridge to the torrid depths where the black gang stood its watches.

The unhappy chief pay clerk was compelled to stay on board the next day to handle the intricate accounts of the ship's pay-roll. With profound relief he watched two hundred bluejackets shove off in the liberty party with money burning holes in their pockets. They had grumbled, as usual, over various stoppages, but he was an old hand at the game and they had put nothing over on him. His accounts balanced to a penny, he retired to a quiet spot beneath an awning and solaced himself with a book and a pipe.

III

MEANWHILE the liberty party was invading Djibuti, eager to discover what excuse it had to offer for existing in this land of barren desolation. Martin Donnelly, machinist's mate, was in one of his glum humors. It was a crime to send a ship to such a dump as this. Moreover, he disliked Frenchmen. He was big-boned, hairy, and tattooed. Continuous hot weather had melted him down until he was almost gaunt. Whenever he came on deck from a watch in the engine-room, the sweat dripped from his bare arms and heavy shoulders and spattered on deck. With the ferocious aspect of a cave man, his voice was mild and his demeanor ordinarily gentle. This made him incongruous.

With him strolled a boyish shipmate, Seaman William Sprague. He looked like a youth whose diversions were harmless. Honest eyes with a glint of mischief in them, a disarming smile, he was the typical recruit, clean, supple, intelligent, that is the pride of the service. He was at that age when a pimple on his chin worried him seriously, and he was ready to squander his pay on the ship's tailor to have his uniform fit just so. Impatience of discipline and a temper that flared now and then had involved him in minor punishments. At heart he was sound. In the forecastle symphony orchestra he passionately performed on the saxophone.

Martin Donnelly's critical survey of Djibuti was given another slant when he spied at his elbow the alert little Matheos of the brindled pate who had been scurrying about to find Mr. Stackpole in the crowd. He was like a dog in quest of a beloved master. Disappointed, he selected Donnelly as a person worthy of temporary allegiance. He was tall and strong and had the frowning air of command. He would be a valiant man in battle.

'Well, look who's here,' said Martin. 'Old Man Stackpole's little black striker, funny fan and everything. He wants to sign on with me.'

'Don't you let him get away,' advised William Sprague. 'Strut your stuff. You are big and ugly enough to be the Sheik of Somaliland.'

Donnelly chuckled and repented of his yearning to take Djibuti to pieces and see what made it tick. He would drift from one sidewalk café to another, amiably looking on, while his black boy fanned him, held a match for his cigarette, and mustered the peddlers of curios for an inspection of their wares. It would be a calm, sensible liberty. 'Kid' Sprague decided to trail along. He might have to stand by. With the best of intentions, the black-browed machinist's mate seemed fated to loom in the midst of unexpected events. At present there were no portents of trouble, but you never could tell.

Donnelly demanded baskets as souvenirs. Matheos ran to look for them. Soon he returned with a scarred, maimed veteran of Abyssinian warfare, his own father, who made painfully halting progress

with a crutch. Here was no whining mendicant, but a strong man brought low, whose glance flashed like that of a captive falcon. A crinkly beard covered his chin. A tiny silver cross was suspended by a cord around his neck. The brown, muscular chest was bare. He was of a different race from the lathy, excitable Somalis.

Learning who he was, Martin Donnelly felt pity for him. A voluble café waiter spoke English and volunteered as an interpreter.

'A scrapper, eh?' said Martin. 'And he got his. The boy is a chip of the old block. Ask him how much he wants for the three baskets. Don't beat him down. Here is where I lay off dickerin' for once.'

Having paid the price, the sailor asked in jest:

'How much for the boy?'

The father displayed no surprise, but talked rapidly to the waiter who announced:

'Five hundred francs, he says.'

'For the love of Mike, will he honestly sell him to me for twenty-five dollars?'

'Yes, sir. He has plenty more boys. It is very hard to live. Five hundred francs is tremendous much money for him. He never saw so much money in his life.'

'Huh, what does little Matheos think about it?'

'He is delighted to have you take him to America in the grand warship. All people in America are rich. He will get rich, too.'

'Could you beat it, Kid?' rumbled Martin.

'Forget it,' was the earnest advice. Trouble

lifted on the horizon like a small, dark cloud. 'You are cuckoo, Martin. You can't buy this young smoke as if he was a basket. For Heaven's sake, what are you going to do with him?'

'Take him home as a present for my dear old mother in Bridgeport, you simp,' was the stubborn reply. 'When the lumbago ketches her, she is on her beam ends for somebody to help her with the housework. She can train this bright lad and bring him up right. And I'll send him to school and learn him to vote the Democratic ticket.'

'But you can't hide him in the ship.'

'Why hide him, Kid? The chief engineer is allowed to keep his German police dog on board. This boy of mine will rate as another pet, understand?'

'I might as well argue with the for'ard twin turret,' sighed William Sprague.

'Don't talk at me like that,' Donnelly protested. 'Listen! Any guy in this man's navy will try anything once. Suppose we keep the boy on board overnight and sort of tactfully spring him on the executive to-morrow. If he blows up, we can send little Matheos ashore. I have taken an awful fancy to this Abyssinian tadpole. And at twenty-five dollars he is a genuine bargain. I can play him two ways. I need a mascot, honest I do, Kid. There ain't a superstitious hair in my head, but some kind of a jinx has surely got a twist on me. Things don't break right. Life has been one jam after another on this cruise. Look what happened to me in

Algiers. And the camel that bit my neck at the Pyramids. And the stewed Englishman that run his flivver plumb off the dock on Christmas Eve at Port Soudan — me sober in the back seat and fourteen feet of water before we hit bottom!'

'Buy the boy, then. What's the use?' wearily exclaimed Seaman Sprague. 'Never say I didn't warn you. You had better keep darn quiet about it or these French cops will throw you in the hoosgow as a slave trader.'

Impervious to insults or rebukes, the obstinate machinist's mate fished out a roll of bank-notes and peeled off five hundred francs. The crippled warrior accepted them with grave courtesy. The transaction was finished. If he felt the natural emotions of a parent, they were stoically repressed. A half-grown boy with a dingy wisp of cloth around his waist had changed ownership. Martin Donnelly resented being called a slave trader. He was merely adding another curio to his collection.

'I ought to put some kind of clothes on him, Kid. Let's go look for a store. It don't seem right to take him off to a smart ship with nothing on but a gee-string.'

They managed to insert Matheos into a white shirt and breeches much too large for him, and clapped a straw hat on his head. Donnelly bought him a cheap American watch and a box of candy. The boy was proud, but acutely uncomfortable. He wriggled and scratched until his owner suggested:

'We'll have to peel the shirt off him, Kid. And

the ship's tailor can chop those pants off like a pair of trunks. For a Christian, he certainly has been runnin' wild and free.'

Later in the afternoon they went off to the *Toledo*, hiring a shore boat instead of waiting for a launch. Up the gangway lumbered Martin Donnelly, respectfully reporting to the officer of the deck. At his heels was the twenty-five-dollar urchin carrying the baskets and other purchases. The officer let him pass and thought no more about it, assuming that Donnelly had brought the boy along to help him aboard with his stuff. The truth was too fantastic for surmise. For several generations the American Navy in foreign waters had been unfamiliar with the slave trade.

In the orderly commotion of supper, with the mess tables crowding the berth deck, the black curio was unheeded. Donnelly tucked him away in an airy torpedo compartment and smuggled in a plate of beans, fried spuds, bread and jam, pickles, and a mug of coffee. Matheos ate until his stomach was as tight as a drum. Then he curled upon the steel deck and went to sleep for the night. He had been granted a glimpse of heavenly bliss.

On certain other occasions it had occurred to Martin Donnelly that he was, by nature, an impulsive man, very apt to leap before he looked. Pondering it overnight, he was almost persuaded that here might be one of those instances. Now and then the flighty Kid Sprague showed good sense. Perhaps he was right. Possibly it was advisable to

send the little Abyssinian derelict ashore. His father would be five hundred francs richer.

Unfortunately Donnelly had to stand a watch from four to eight in the morning. He shook Matheos awake and sternly commanded him to remain hidden in the torpedo compartment until further notice. When he came off watch, however, the disobedient slave had vanished. It was a trying situation. William Sprague had no information to offer. He was righteously indifferent. Served the old dumb-bell of a Donnelly right. Let him worry!

Tidings came from the warrant officers' quarters. Matheos had roamed about until, by chance, he caught sight of the portly, dignified figure of Mr. Cassius Stackpole emerging on deck for a breath of air before breakfast. The boy joyfully beheld the master of his first choice, whom he had desired to serve rather for sentiment than for cash. Now he resolved to adhere to the admirable chief pay clerk like a barnacle. A stickler for the regulations of the service, Mr. Stackpole was annoyed, not to say flustered. He could not understand, for the life of him, how the small rascal had been able to sneak on board the ship. He would be bundled ashore at once.

With broken words and frantic gestures, Matheos conveyed the fact that he couldn't be kicked off in this summary fashion. He had been properly bought and paid for and was consigned to America. It would be like stealing property to take him away from his owner.

'God bless me, what crazy notion is this?' muttered the bewildered chief pay clerk. 'Has one of the men actually bought a slave? It's incredible. It may result in complications with the French administration.'

With this he towed the troublesome Matheos to the upper deck. Discipline held the crew quiet, but to a man they were jubilantly interested. The snickers became audible. The black boy grinned nervously and showed the whites of his eyes. Something had gone wrong with his destiny. He sensed this much. He pointed at the glowering Donnelly who peered from behind a ventilator. The brawny machinist's mate seemed coy and bashful. Mr. Stackpole advanced majestically to confront him, clutching Matheos by one ear.

'See here, Donnelly, I am amazed! Were you drunk on liberty?'

'No, sir, and never am, and you know it. What do you mean by takin' hold of my property in that careless way? You are liable to damage it. There's no use in bawling out the fact that this was a bargain sale. I intend to get rid of the boy, don't I?'

'But you committed a serious offense against the laws of this French colony, in the first place. And now you violate the regulations covering the presence of unauthorized persons aboard a naval vessel.'

'Pipe down, if you please, Mr. Stackpole. I was sort of soft-hearted and mushy yesterday. The less fuss, the sooner mended.'

There was merit in the argument. Mr. Stackpole

retreated below, leaving the luckless pickaninny in the grasp of Martin Donnelly. Not long after this, the bugle sounded unexpected calls that sent the deck watch to stations on the run. The boats, floating at the mooring booms, were cast free to be hooked to the falls and hoisted aloft to the davits. The order had come from the captain, after consultation with the navigating officer. The word ran through the ship that the weather signs were ominous. An oily sea, a hazy sky, and a rapidly falling barometer indicated a violent disturbance.

The harbor of Djibuti was fairly well sheltered unless the wind should blow straight from seaward. The captain of the *Toledo* proposed to run no chances. He concluded to cut his visit short and steam out into the Gulf of Aden in order to avoid the peril of a lee shore and a network of sandy shoals. Without fuss or delay, the anchor winch heaved in the ponderous cable while the boats were swung inboard, chocked, and lashed. It was done in man-of-war style. Moving slowly out, the long, gray cruiser signaled a farewell to Djibuti.

IV

MARTIN DONNELLY scowled and scratched his head. He was entangled in a snarl of circumstances. The *Toledo* would probably proceed down the coast to Mombasa, the next port of call, which was almost a week distant. The Lord only knew what was to be done with twenty-five dollars' worth of slave whom nobody seemed to want. Matheos had refused to remain stowed away. The fat was in the fire. The unhappy Donnelly resolved to appeal to the executive officer, as had been the original intention. Better have it out than to be dodging about in this uneasy state of mind.

The executive, or second in command, was a burly, red-necked man, in build much like Mr. Cassius Stackpole, but with more ability and greater driving power. Never sparing himself, anxious to tune the ship to the highest degree of efficiency, he was respected by the men although they did not like him. He was too incessantly zealous.

When Martin Donnelly ventured to accost him, he was coming out of the captain's cabin with a radio sheet in his hand. Apparently the message had irritated him.

'What is it, Donnelly? Shoot!' he snapped out.

'Well, sir, I sort of adopted a little black boy in Djibuti — er — temporarily, sir,' began the elaborate explanation. 'That is, he came off to the ship

with some baskets for me, and there was no time to put him on the beach. The ship sailed. May I keep him for a pet, same as the chief engineer's police dog that eats as much and takes up more room —'

The executive glared and waved the radio sheet as he gustily interrupted:

'Adopted? So you are the guilty bird! Do you know what this message is? From the Governor of French Somaliland to the commander of *U.S.S. Toledo*. This ship is accused of taking a slave on board. We are asked, politely ordered, by God, to transfer the nigger to the gunboat *Diane* if she gets in touch with us. It is a humiliating insult to the American flag. Get that, do you? You ought to be stood up and shot.'

'I plead not guilty, pending the verdict of the court,' logically returned the culprit. 'I never stopped to figure all that out. On the level, sir, all I did was to buy him for a family pet and maybe change my luck. The chief engineer paid more'n twenty-five dollars for his dog. And how could I shove little Matheos ashore when the ship went hell-bent out to sea?'

The executive had other affairs on his hands. He vanished down a ladder to the lower deck, leaving Donnelly in dumb wonderment. The friendly waiter in the café must have talked too much. The captain was wrestling with an answer to the exasperating message from the French Governor. This was, indeed, a hornet's nest. A general court-martial and at least five years in a naval prison would be lenient

punishment for this international outrage so innocently perpetrated.

A few hours after this, the cruiser was plunging into a gale that swept her decks with frothing seas. It had the capricious ferocity of a tropical tempest, a shifting wind and black rain squalls. It hammered the narrow ship with thunderous blows that made her quiver. At reduced speed she tried to head into it, but was flung this way and that in a raging welter of gray water.

Boyish recruits, proof against seasickness until now, collapsed in pallid misery and crawled into corners from which heartless boatswain's mates hauled them out by the leg. Ports were smashed, living quarters flooded. One roaring comber splintered a whaleboat, and men toiled to clear away the débris at peril of their lives. In short, the *Toledo* was thoroughly shaken up as an episode of her 'shakedown cruise.'

Little black Matheos, son of an Abyssinian fighting man, was left to wander about the ship like a bit of flotsam. He was unable to find Mr. Cassius Stackpole. Martin Donnelly was down below, slipping about on the engine-room gratings with a wrench in his fist. For the time his slave was an orphan of the storm. It was a terrifying situation for a child of the mountains and desert, suddenly transported into a new, infinitely complex world of men and things and thrust into the tumult of a tempest at sea.

The boy was limp with nausea and bruised from

falling against steel bulkheads and gun-shields, but he rocked about on his shaky pins and refused to surrender. There was no hint of fear in his bright eyes. If he had to drown in this huge, mysterious boat, he would never whimper about it. When a passing seaman patted his head or flung him a word of good cheer, he showed his white teeth in a brave smile and perhaps went rolling like a football with the next lurch of the laboring vessel.

Seafarers are a sentimental lot with queer notions of their own. The feeling spread among the crew of the *Toledo* that the boy was a mascot and to be accepted as such. He was no nigger, so the story ran, but bred from a race which no nation had been able to whip. In this rough weather he had stood to his guns while strapping Yankee lads had curled up and quit. He was the real goods.

The wind blew itself out during the night. The cruiser picked up headway and crashed through seas still sullenly swollen. She laid a course to make the long run down the African coast. Damages were repaired, the manifold routine of duty restored. Matheos, once more a very happy morsel of humanity, renewed his allegiance to Mr. Stackpole. He wished to sleep outside his cabin door and had to be chased away. He quarreled with the Filipino mess boy for the honor of cleaning Mr. Stackpole's shoes and tried to stab him with a knife snatched from the pantry.

Alas, the estimable chief pay clerk had hardened his heart. Matheos had become an infernal little

nuisance. His devotion was conspicuous and annoying. It was provocative of stupid jests among the ship's company. As a stowaway, Matheos defied the regulations. Mr. Stackpole was a bureaucrat afloat. The letter of the law was his gospel. Therefore he was a model chief pay clerk.

It distressed him to perceive that the crew had been won over to the cause of the dusky mascot from Djibuti. He sought out Martin Donnelly and reproached him bitterly.

'As a bone-head, you have excelled yourself this time, Donnelly. The men have turned foolish over this boy and want to keep him on board. It will stir up bad feeling if he is chucked ashore at Mombasa.'

'You bet it will,' agreed the other. 'Then why not leave him be? Right you are. The gobs have gone daffy over him since he showed his stuff in the typhoon or whatever it was. He is a candidate for the Ancient Order of Shellbacks. We cross the Line between here and Mombasa and they're all set to initiate the moke when King Neptune takes command. I knew he was a good kid when I bought him. But why ride me about it, Mr. Stackpole? Matheos has quit me cold. He belongs to the *Toledo* now.'

'That is the difficulty, Donnelly. This is a taut ship, as you know. All hands have to toe the mark. There is no more growling than you might expect, and yet some little thing might turn the scale and make it a discontented, unhappy ship. That means punishment reports, desertions, inefficiency.'

'And they will turn sore if Matheos is set on the beach, Mr. Stackpole? You said a mouthful.'

'Then, confound it, try to argue them out of their silly state of mind. You have first claim on the boy. The whole thing is thoroughly lawless. I wish I hadn't met that French lieutenant from the *Diane* with his talk about the slave patrol. It makes me feel mighty uncomfortable.'

'Huh! You fret easy, Mr. Stackpole. Look at the hole *I'm* in. The captain had me in his cabin this morning. He may look like a college professor, but the dapper little cuss has the punch. Him and me were shipmates in the war zone when he was senior officer of a destroyer division. That's the only thing that saves me from a deck court. I told him I didn't mean to keep the boy on board. Listen to this! If we had met up with this *Diane* gunboat at sea, what do you think might have happened? If your buddy, the French lieutenant, had insisted on sendin' a boat aboard to search for a slave, the *Toledo* would have cleared for action! The captain told me so! Haven't I got enough on my mind? I came damn near touchin' off a war with France! And one reason I bought this black boy was to change my luck. Please lay off, Mr. Stackpole. The captain peeled the hide off me and then put me on the strictest kind of probation. On the level, you have no idea how I've got to watch my step.'

'But the captain intends to get rid of the boy, doesn't he?' asked the chief pay clerk.

'I suppose so. He is as fussy about the regulations

as you are. Living so much by himself, he can't size up the feelings of the men.'

The executive officer was of the captain's opinion, only more so. It would never do to yield to the whimsies of a crowd of sailors. Sentiment has no place in a modern man-of-war.

Matheos was a sharp-witted child with powers of observation unspoiled by civilization or blurred by the bungling processes of education. Mr. Stackpole had turned against him. This was a cause for sorrow. The executive was the man whom Matheos marked as his implacable enemy. The captain was remote and unseen, a personage behind a curtain. The active chief of this sea-going tribe was the big-bodied, tyrannical executive officer who seemed to be all over the ship at one time. He it was who had the power and the will to thrust Matheos out from his enchanted kingdom. His manner showed that he intended so to do. Squatting on deck, trying to tie the knots taught him by the sailmaker's mate, Matheos had been rudely shoved out of the way by the executive's foot. His words were very angry.

If it were possible to slay this hard-tempered chief whose word was law! Then Matheos might remain undisturbed among his sailor friends. Thereupon this small, black Christian plotted how he might slip a blade between the tyrant's ribs while he slept. But discovery might be unpleasantly swift and certain, and they would hang Matheos from one of the tall masts. It was in the twilight that he sat hunched upon a hammock netting and busied himself with these unholy thoughts.

Most of the crew had drifted to the open deck where the motion-picture screen was rigged abaft the funnels. They found seats upon the gun-turrets, the aeroplane catapults, the fire-control platform, the steel deck. It was a theater uncommonly picturesque. Against a star-spattered sky, these ocean wanderers laughed at Buster Keaton or were frankly critical of melodrama of the open spaces where men were men.

Matheos was about to scamper after them. He had never seen a motion picture. Rumors of such a marvel had filled him with excitement. Just then he happened to notice a heavily built man in an officer's uniform walking aft. It was like looking down a long corridor with the electric-light bulbs glowing from the white walls.

That broad back was familiar, even at a distance. Matheos would follow Mr. Stackpole and try to win his favor. It was a grievous thing to have lost it. The reasons were obscure to Matheos. He flitted in pursuit, silent, furtive, ready to flee. The man he sought passed out of the crew quarters and was lost sight of, for the moment, on the low after-deck, where the cruiser's stern tapered as fine as the tail of a shark and the churning screws made a tossing carpet of foam.

A favorite lounging-place for the chief petty officers, this deck chanced to be deserted just now. It was more or less in shadow. Matheos stole ahead and paused. Brave as he was, his heart fluttered. Mr. Stackpole could not escape from him while he

should entreat forgiveness on hands and knees. And there was no one to interrupt them. If the Ras Stackpole should be good enough to intercede, perhaps Matheos would not be banished from the beautiful ship and the amazingly benevolent sailors.

Matheos saw him move to the edge of the deck and stand leaning against the wire rope that served as a rail. He was gazing down at the seething water which raced so near that it was fascinating to watch. More than once Matheos had hung over the wire rope himself, listening to the voices of the waves which sounded like the shouts of warriors among the mountains.

Now he saw the broad back in the white blouse lean too far over the wire rope, clutch at it, sway again, and topple forward. It suggested the helpless behavior of a man stricken by vertigo or made giddy by a heat stroke. Uncannily and with no outcry, the toppling figure vanished from the deck.

Matheos rubbed his eyes and darted to the spot. This incredible disappearance was like the tales the witch doctors told.

The sea was darkening. The boy fancied he saw a man's head come up astern, in the swirling, flickering eddies. The ship was moving at her standard cruising speed of sixteen knots. The distracted Matheos knew nothing about sounding an alarm or finding a life-buoy to cast adrift. All he could do was to emit one shrill yell after another as he ran to the stern. Here he bounded from the deck as though made of rubber and cleared the wire rope in a

splendid dive. His lithe body was as straight as an arrow as it shot into the boiling froth and went clear of the murderous screws. It was the instinctive gesture of a devotion that held death as naught.

A gunner's mate, straying aft to see that the canvas weather-screens of a turret had been properly secured for the night, heard the boy yell and caught a glimpse of him as he shot into the sea. The swift deduction was that the twenty-five-dollar mascot had gone crazy, a homesick fit or something, and had decided to pass out. To find him seemed utterly hopeless, but the gunner's mate moved like lightning. A slash of his knife and he parted the lashing of a ring-buoy with an automatic light. A few strides and he was telephoning to the wheel-house the dread signal of 'man overboard.'

The bugler flung the message to the crowd at the motion-picture show. The turbine engines, reversing on the port side, shoving ahead on the starboard, swung the ship in an arc to retrace her course. The lifeboat crew, always ready for such a call as this, scrambled in to lower away, with a junior lieutenant in charge. A powerful searchlight swept the dusky sea with a shaft of blinding radiance.

Meanwhile little Matheos had bobbed to the surface like a cork. Although cruelly tossed about and strangled, he felt as much at home as a fish. Swimming easily, saving his strength, he strove to extricate himself from the tumult of the ship's wake. This accomplished he was thankful to be rocking on the back of a long, unbroken swell.

The cruiser seemed ever so far away, a tall, dim shape against a shrouding sky. She seemed to be receding. The boy had been unseen and unheard, so he conjectured. He had been left to die. However, it was not in him to surrender in supine despair. He regained his breath, blowing like a porpoise, and scanned the sea for a sight of Mr. Stackpole. He was invisible. The daylight had faded too fast. But Matheos did espy a strange, brilliant jet of flame very close to the water. It perplexed him.

He swam toward it, a little afraid of some sinister magic. After warily circling the flame, which hissed at him, he paddled closer and threw an arm over the round metal buoy. It supported his weight so easily that he pulled himself up and sat with his legs in the water. From this position he could see the ship turning to come back and pick him up. It was all quite miraculous.

Vainly he stared this way and that but could discern no Mr. Stackpole. This made him weep. In huddled dejection he sat until the cruiser's searchlight dazzled his eyes. This questing illumination presently revealed to the boy's keen vision the head and shoulders of a man, a hundred yards away, who floundered in the last stages of exhaustion. Feebly he was endeavoring to swim to the light-buoy, but he could do no more than splash in a futile struggle for survival.

Matheos slid from off the buoy and swam with all his might. To the God of his fathers he prayed that he might not be too late. Rapidly he swam in

the path of the searchlight which had discovered him and was no longer sweeping to and fro. He saw the drowning man go down and come up, beating the water with his arms. A final burst of speed, and Matheos had reached him and was holding fast to his collar.

Panting but unwearied, the boy fairly squealed with astonishment. The man was not Mr. Cassius Stackpole at all! It was the detestable executive officer!

In physical build they were very much alike. The boy had seen the broad back at some little distance in the long corridor of the berth deck and again, briefly, at the wire rope far aft where the light was poor. Hatred, chagrin, flamed in the soul of Matheos whose emotional impulses were peculiarly elemental. Vengeance was a virtue. The only Christian doctrine he had inherited was an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. In his hands was the enemy who had treated him so harshly, who had decreed his banishment from the ship, who had a heart of stone. Let him drown and the sailors would keep Matheos and be his friends and take him to America.

While he revolved these things in his mind, he was holding the executive officer's head above water. The latter was a robust man but an indifferent swimmer, like many mariners. And the spell of vertigo which had caused him to pitch overboard had dulled his energies. Now with the respite granted by the intervention of little Matheos, his head was clearing. He ceased to struggle in frantic flurries.

To him it appeared to be a frightfully long journey to the light-buoy. The cruiser's boat was nowhere in sight. Distinctly the issue of life and death was in the keeping of the Abyssinian waif. He had merely to release his grip on the officer's collar and push his head under. This would neatly square the account and remove the largest obstacle to the peace and happiness of Matheos.

The water-logged executive gurgled a few words of gratitude. Just what he had done to earn this superbly heroic rescue was beyond his comprehension. He was in no condition, however, to analyze the situation.

To his dismay, the black hero relinquished his grip and was treading water in a leisurely manner as though debating a decision about something or other. The unfortunate castaway was unable to keep himself afloat without a supporting hand. It was a certainty that, unaided, he could never reach the light-buoy and so save himself. He disappeared beneath a crested wave. Matheos dived and dragged him up so that he could breathe again.

'For G-god's sake, d-don't let go,' spluttered the executive. 'I'm all in. C-cramps!'

Matheos had arrived at a conclusion. He was in a position to dictate terms.

'Me stay ship? Me allé Amérique?' he shrilly demanded.

'N-not on your life,' was the bubbling answer of a masterful man unaccustomed to defeat. 'Wow, you b-black murderer. G-get off my shoulders.'

The pitiless Matheos was thrusting his victim down, down — chin, nose — then his head vanished. Up he came for a moment and heard the cruel, piping voice assail him with the words:

'*Me allé Amérique?*'

Rebellious to the last, his professional feelings outraged, the drowning naval officer implored in accents choked with brine and anger:

'D-don't! You infernal little d-devil —'

Matheos grinned maliciously. Once more he permitted the wretch to struggle for himself. It was enough. Abjectly the executive officer of *U.S.S. Toledo* surrendered. Hoarsely he muttered:

'You w-win, d-damn your soul. Now g-grab me tight and d-don't turn me loose again.'

Matheos held fast and encouraged his valuable prize to kick himself in the direction of the light-buoy. The youngster was wonderfully expert at this business of saving human life. Expending the least possible exertion, he knew precisely what to do.

Easily they rode to the cradling motion of the swell until the whaleboat came splashing toward them with a dozen bluejackets pulling lustily at the oars. Slacking way, two of them fairly flipped Matheos over the gunwale. It was a heavier task to heave the executive inboard. He collapsed in the stern-sheets. Enthusiastically the junior lieutenant addressed him.

'The Djibuti coon did a wonderful stunt, sir. From what we saw of it, you came precious close to losing your number. He got to you just in time.'

The executive grunted. The chorus of praise for little Matheos jarred his sensibilities, but he could not dispute it. He was bound by circumstances, as an officer and gentleman, and would have to abide by his bargain. In more ways than one, Matheos had him by the back of the neck.

Not at all the worse for wear, the boy squatted beside the coxswain in a kind of ecstasy while he gazed at the warship whose lights gleamed in his sight like wondrous jewels.

The executive officer was hoisted up a rope ladder and put to bed. By the very narrowest of margins had he escaped permanent lodgings with Davy Jones. His recollections of the episode were nightmarish in the extreme. He was able, the next morning, to report to the captain and discuss a certain matter which weighed upon him very heavily. The commander of the cruiser, a man of human sympathies, was anxious to learn the details at first hand.

'I tried to get something out of the young Abyssinian last night,' said he. 'What's his name? Matthew? Matheos? He knelt and waggled his head as if he felt afraid of me.'

'What did he tell you, sir?' asked the executive, his sunburned cheek turning redder.

'Oh, I couldn't follow his native lingo, but he peppered it with French and English words. He had jumped overboard to save you because you are the fighting leader of this ocean tribe, or something like that. I am the royal highness, I presume. How did it happen?'

'I went aft to take a look overside, sir. Some of the chief petty officers have been leaving their ports open and sticking wind-scoops in them. The sea is not smooth enough for that. It is liable to flood the compartment. I leaned out too far and pitched over. My head went queer. This hot weather has been trying.'

'And the black boy went after you,' exclaimed the captain. 'Splendid of him! Lucky he wandered out on the fan-tail just then.'

'It was that,' said the executive, finding it difficult to look the captain in the eye. 'Er — I feel tremendously grateful to the little rascal, of course.'

'So do I,' was the hearty assurance. 'The whole ship is eager to reward him.'

'I know what will please him more than anything else, sir, to stay in the ship. In fact, I most earnestly request that you permit it. I have changed my mind. You understand why. I owe that kid too much. And the men will applaud it.'

The commander reflected. It ruffled him to recall that distasteful message from the Governor of French Somaliland and the slave patrol of the gunboat *Diane*. What about diplomatic consequences? Reading his mind, the executive suggested:

'Donnelly muddled the thing in his usual style. He didn't really buy the boy, as I look at it. He is a big-hearted, generous fellow, as you know. He felt sorry for the crippled father and made him a present of five hundred francs. Then he brought the kid off for a little visit overnight. It was just like a gob.'

'A plausible interpretation,' smiled the captain, with a twinkle. 'And I guess it will have to do.'

'Why not give the boy a temporary rating in the galley,' said the relieved executive. 'He can peel spuds and run errands. It will keep him out of mischief.'

'Very good. What about the immigration laws at home? Is there a quota from Somaliland?'

'Leave that to me, sir. I'll keep the boy on the ship until I can figure out some way of landing him. As a member of the crew, he can't be interfered with.'

In this manner did the second in command discharge his incalculable obligation to little black Matheos of the ancient, unconquered Abyssinian race. On deck hovered Martin Donnelly, awaiting the verdict. He stepped forward to say:

'If you please, sir, what about my twenty-five-dollar bargain?'

'Your pet charity,' barked the executive. 'Forget that stuff, you old blunderhead. The boy stays. If you ever do it again, I'll put you in double irons.'

Seaman William Sprague was soulfully tooting his saxophone in the second dog watch when Donnelly sauntered up to say:

'The Navy has gone plumb to pot when they allow noises like that. Listen, Kid, do you remember what I told you in that Djibuti café, when I bought — I mean took on a pet charity? I had hopes it would switch my luck. Well, it didn't. The hunch was a misfire. I'm in wrong with the skipper, and the

executive's favorite sport is bawling me out. I haven't put the lid on the jinx a-tall. It's enough to worry a man to death.'

'I should worry,' coldly replied the musical artist. 'Didn't I try to steer you off? For the love of Pete, Martin, when a bright boy like me is willing to spill good advice in your left ear, do try to take it seriously. Now that this Abyssinian gink has wished himself on the executive, you are all clear to make a fresh start.'

'Easy, Kid. Don't be harsh to me,' mildly objected the machinist's mate. 'You hurt my feelings. I just naturally seem to lead a pestered life.'

V

THE cable thundered through the hawse pipe and the anchor splashed into the azure harbor of Zanzibar, most romantic of the sun-drenched islands of the Indian Ocean. The sun was no more than two hours high, but the languid breeze, heavy with the scent of cloves in the bud and blossom, foretold a day of blistering heat. The scout cruiser smartly swung out her boats and lowered away the captain's gig and two large launches called motor sailers. They foamed across the harbor or circled about the ship in order to test the engines and then tied up at the booms to await orders.

They invoked visions of liberty parties and another strange port to ramble in — curio shops and rickshas, pineapples and mangoes, cold beer, brown-skinned girls, music for a dance. Zanzibar peculiarly appealed to the imagination. The very name sounded gorgeously exotic. It was different from the African coast, even more out of the world and away from the beaten tracks of tourists.

High-pooped dhows, gaudily painted, whose dyed sails had winged it from waters as remote as the Persian Gulf, were at rest amid a huddle of smaller craft. Beyond them the island was verdantly enticing, tall palms, lush gardens, and roads winding like smooth ribbons. The city was a mass of

flat-roofed, white buildings that swam in the quivering glare. There were glimpses of streets so narrow that the jutting galleries of the Arab houses seemed to meet across them. On the coral beach, crowds of natives in snowy garments silently stared at the unfamiliar sight of an American warship.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole sighed. A maritime philosopher mellowed by years and experiences, he was seldom disturbed by the futile emotion of regret. Now he found himself regarding Youth with a touch of wistful envy. Rampant, impressionable Youth that assumed so much and knew so little! It fairly jostled him on the decks of the *Toledo*. Corn-fed lads from prairie farms, weedy loafers from city streets, mannerly boys with backgrounds of refinement, they were intimately akin in the spirit of eager adventure that had lured them to follow the sea.

In this mood of mildest melancholy, Mr. Stackpole was reading a vivid little book of travel south of Suez. Yes, it must have been written by a young man, he said to himself. Such a passage as this arrested his eye and brought to mind his own first impressions many years earlier:

> Zanzibar is a courtesan, whimsical, gay, sullen, presenting many aspects. Warm, rich, beautiful, concealing with dissembling art its sinister spots, it lavishes its charms, intoxicates with its beauty, smothers with its opulence; or suddenly, after a smouldering silence, it rends itself with rage. The screaming tornado rips its verdure to tatters, bony-fingered pestilence goes leering down its dark alleyways, fever shakes the life out of its victims. And afterwards the bright sun sparkles upon

the rain-washed foliage, and the island smiles again with the innocent radiance of a maiden. . . .

'I suppose I felt that way when I was here in the old *Brooklyn*,' soliloquized Mr. Stackpole. He mused a moment and then read on.

Zanzibar Town is Paris to the reckless wanderers, from the Bantu folk of Cape Delgado to the sons of the corsairs of Oman. Its clubs; its coffee shops; its cinemas; its dark, arched rooms, where dusky belles from India, Arabia, the Somali coast, and Zanzibar giggle and shrill and dance monotonous dances; its spreading mango trees under whose shelter the torches burn and the tom-toms beat the measures of night-long *n'gomas;* its shops tumbling with riches of roughly carved ivory and ebony, or hammered Cingalese silver and gems; its bazaars, gay with cheap cloth — *kikoys*, *hodrunks*, *kanzas*, bright with prints of flags and ships and emblems of royalty; the great ships lying in its roads, pouring into the lap of black Africa the increasing luxuries of Europe. . . .

'A bit high-flown,' was Mr. Stackpole's comment, 'but it is all there if one has young eyes to see it.'

It was absurd, as he realized, to sit and mope like an elderly man whose sense of enjoyment, of the zest and savor of life, had lost its salt. It was partly the contrast, perhaps, between the sophistication of forty years and the headlong exuberance of the *Toledo's* infants of the sea. Moreover, to be shackled to a ship's office filled with stenographers and clerks called yeomen had long since brushed the bloom from adventure. Zanzibar? Another port with its round of errands as guide and assistant to the pay-

master. Papers to be signed. Stuff to be bought and fetched aboard.

The most even-tempered of men have their dark, inwardly rebellious moments. Mr. Cassius Stackpole, chief pay clerk, was not exempt.

VI

Seaman William Sprague, desisting from polishing bright-work, wiped his face with a bit of clean waste and muttered bitterly:

'Join the Navy and see the world! Sure! Through a port-hole. And I was dumb enough to fall for the bunk. Me with a perfectly good high-school education. Restricted to the ship in the last port, and a sweet chance I have of seeing Zanzibar and everything! And it does look good after all that desert coast. I'm still on the report, I s'pose.'

He was scowling when Martin Donnelly came up from below. Whacking the unhappy young seaman over the head, he gruffly exclaimed:

'Cheer up, Kid. Why the grouch? You get it pretty soft. Whew, it's cold on deck. I'm shiverin'.'

'Aw, quit that stuff, Martin. You're a great old josher, you are. This is the hottest darned hole we have hit yet. I guess I have a case of sun-stroke right now. My head feels awful funny and I am all hollow and faint on my insides.'

'You'll get over that when you hear mess gear sounded,' scoffed the machinist's mate. 'Chow is what you need. That's all you young goofs think of. My gosh, do you want to eat all the time? Listen, Kid, you come from my home town of Bridgeport and I take an interest in you, understand? You can crowd me just about so far. No more of this beefin'. Pipe down. Do you know what the temperatures

are where I stand my four-hour watch? It's a hundred and twenty-five degrees in the engine-room right now and we call that comfortable. At sea the fire-room has been runnin' as high as a hundred and fifty degrees. You could smell your dungarees scorching. Now think it over. I wish I had you in the black gang for a week or two.'

'A hundred and fifty degrees? Honest?' exclaimed Kid Sprague. 'I don't see how you guys stand it. I never heard of such a thing.'

'Well, we don't holler, even if a fireman or watertender has to be dragged out by the heels now and then. On the level, Kid, I don't like the way you behave. You are lucky to have one of the best division officers in the ship, and he took a shine to you from the start. I heard him say so. He thinks you have the makin' of a gun-pointer. I didn't size you up as one of those half-baked young jazz-hounds with a yellow streak that whine because they have to sleep in hammocks and keep 'emselves clean and take orders. Come through. What's wrong?'

'No liberty,' sulkily confessed William. 'I was kept on board at Mombasa and the other lads had a swell time. And we have had a pay day since then, and I've coin to blow.'

'You deserved what you got, Kid,' was the severe rejoinder. 'Your locker was a rat's nest at captain's inspection. Your hammock was lashed all wrong, and you were careless with a broom when sweepers were called. And didn't I hear you give a boatswain's mate some lip?'

'Here, that's a-plenty. Let up on me, will you?' begged William Sprague. 'I'll be good. What's the word to-day? One o'clock liberty?'

'Yes. The port watch shoves off. How do you know you are still restricted? Go find out. I do hate a gob with no snap to him.'

Martin Donnelly stalked in the direction of the shower baths and a change of clothes. Then he would sit beneath the awning on the fan-tail and placidly admire the landscape, wondering about people and things in his large, contemplative fashion. The Navy had long since claimed him for its own. He had no other ambitions, no restless moods. Hades in the fire-room? What else could you expect? Scout cruisers were not built for service so close to the Equator. But there was a hundred thousand horse-power in the turbine engines and she could do thirty-five knots when they lighted off all twelve boilers and really pushed her along. Not a ship for a joy-ride. But why fuss about it because she hadn't been designed as a yacht?

To his delighted surprise, Kid Sprague found his name on the liberty list. He had hoped for the best and expected the worst. Sharp on the minute he joined the light-hearted throng on deck as they stood in long lines and passed an officer's rigid scrutiny — hair neatly cut, chins shaved, shoes polished, spotless white clothes and hats, black kerchiefs tied in the proper knot. Down the gangway they filed, into the motor sailers, until all the thwarts were filled.

They were ready to stroll through the streets of Zanzibar as if they owned it, curious and unabashed. In charge of a youthful lieutenant, the patrol had already gone ashore, a score of sturdy bluejackets wearing leggings, canteens, and swinging solid nightsticks. They would enforce law and order, if needs be, and woe betide an errant shipmate who might presume to dispute their authority. They were vigorously impartial and impersonal chaperons.

Seaman Sprague was in a virtuous frame of mind. No *Toledo* patrol or Zanzibar cop would have to look at him twice. He and trouble were going to be entire strangers. As a rule, his historical backgrounds were extremely sketchy. With Zanzibar, however, he felt a certain acquaintance. He had taken the trouble to rummage in the crew's library. Long before the Christian era, the venturesome traders and seafarers of the rich kingdom of Sheba had found this luxuriant island in their quest of spices, ivory, tortoise shell, and ebony. Fought over by the Arabs and the early Portuguese explorers, in modern times Zanzibar had been taken over by England as one of her far-flung protectorates.

From the quay near the Sultan's palace, William Sprague and his comrades pushed their way through a noisy, impudent mob of native vagabonds in flowing garments who yelled:

'Me Garge Washin'ton, bes' guide in Zanzibar. Show you bazaars — nice girls —'

'You know me, sar. Charlie Chapleen — numbah one guide — plenty letters from navy sheeps —

You buy amber — rugs — ivory beads — I show you cheapes' place.'

'You come go wiz Teddy Roosevelt, Mistah. My name Teddy — all same American Sultan! You want bully good guide? Atta boyee!'

The impetuous visitors charged through the mob like a football team, with shouts of 'Beat it,' 'Vamoose,' 'On your way.' George Washington and Charlie Chaplin were tipped heels over head. The liberty party soon scattered among twisting, roughly paved alleys that were no more than gashes between the lofty Arab buildings. The fragrance of cloves was wafted from the stone warehouses with doorways of wonderfully carved teak, from the laden carts creaking past, from the wharves and lighters near by. This was the wealth of Zanzibar, packed in bags for the merchant ships to carry away.

The American bluejackets roamed at random to explore the Hindoo shops and the dark cubby-holes in which the Arab craftsmen toiled at tasks intricate and delicate; to gaze at the picturesque tides of humanity that eddied through this market-place of the Indian Ocean. There were half-naked Swahili laborers; piratical captains of dhows with daggers in their sashes; clerkly Goanese spinning around corners on bicycles; haughty Arabs, sleek Egyptians with red fezzes; brown men from Madagascar jabbering in French; black men from Uganda who looked like cannibals; stately wanderers from Abyssinia; shrewd Chinese picking up bargains; Indian traders of every caste; and lording it over them all

the sun-reddened Englishman under his white helmet, with his malacca stick and his easy air of superiority.

A turn of these blind streets and a stranger was likely to lose himself. Kid Sprague halted to watch an ivory-carver ply his tools. When he turned to follow his mates they had gone from sight, following their own devices. He ran after them, soon gave it up as hopeless, and made a chance acquaintance in the person of a British bluejacket from a light cruiser which had been several days in port. For once it was hands across the sea and an amiable meeting instead of some tactless remark about the battle of Bunker Hill as the fuse to touch off a fine, large shindy.

'You're not so worse, for a bloomin' Limie,' observed the candid Kid as they drifted arm-in-arm.

'And you ain't such a blinkin' blow-'ard as most of the Yanks,' handsomely returned Coxswain Torbett of *H.M.S. Spitfire*. 'It's odd, now, that us Allies should always be a-punchin' of one another's 'eads when we meet in a foreign port same as this. I mind me one time in Sydney — we runs afoul of one of your battleships, and it is all friendly and polite till a perishin' Yank refuses to drink the 'ealth of the King, God bless 'im, and calls His Majesty a stuffed shirt. I didn't see much of what followed, the reason bein' that some blighter hove the showcase that the cigars was kept in and smashed it over my bean. Cheerio, Kid! We'll get on, you and me. Sorry I'm stony broke.'

'Forget it, old top. I've got a bundle of kale. First we buy a bunch of bananas to pack along with us. Then we drink a couple of bottles of suds. I'm no souse myself. After that we get hauled around in a couple of rickshas and look for a cool spot.'

'Right-o!' heartily agreed Coxswain Torbett as they steered to find a banana merchant. Just then William Sprague spied a bedraggled puppy that was making heavy weather of it amid the press of traffic. It dodged two panting coolies bearing a bale of silk slung from shoulder poles, almost rolled under the wheels of a honking automobile, and was knocked sprawling by a donkey's hoof.

A bandy-legged, nondescript foundling of a pup, desirous of sitting down to scratch its numerous fleas, but destruction menaced on every hand and it could find no haven of safety! A naked urchin flung a stick at it. The forlorn pup yelped and fled to the nearest doorway, tail between its legs.

Young Seaman Sprague forgot the coxswain from *H.M.S. Spitfire* and the bunch of bananas. This distracted, unlovely pup touched his sympathies and he dashed in chase. The orphan mutt had found no refuge in the arched doorway. A swarthy gentleman, about to enter, grasped it by the neck and tossed it into the street. Kid Sprague tacked to intercept it, but the frightened puppy mistook his intentions and madly scuttled into the nearest alley. Its uncertain, crooked legs moved with incredible speed. They kicked the dust behind it.

The American sailor dived, missed his quarry,

and saw it scamper around the corner of a building. He was not to be baffled by this wretched little fugitive, so he loped the faster and finally pounced upon it in a brass-worker's tiny shop. As a dog, it was dubious in the extreme. Its ancestry was mixed and clouded. Whatever the merits of the various breeds that composed its lineage, it had inherited none of their graces.

'Just plain yaller dog,' said the Kid as he tucked it under his arm. 'But you never can tell. He may grow into something. Some of that well-known discipline aboard ship and we'll make a man of him yet. Quit those yips, Moses Mahomet Ali. Get that? You are christened, and you've found a friend. Talk about curios! You sure do look it.'

The soft-hearted seaman attempted to retrace his course, but soon found himself bewildered. It couldn't be very far to the spot where he had left the impecunious British coxswain, he reflected, but if you took just one wrong slant you were out of luck. You steamed in circles until you met yourself coming back.

Presently he gave it up in disgust. Every street was as crooked as a snake and so narrow that you could not see more than the length of your nose. Well, it made no great difference. Coxswain Torbett was not a serious loss. Sooner or later he might have made some crack about why America was so late in coming into the war and it would have been necessary to poke him one on the jaw. Meanwhile the salvaged mutt, henceforth to be known as Moses Ma-

homet Ali, had snuggled down in the crook of the Kid's arm, with an occasional whimper that suggested a craving for nourishment.

'Hungry, hey, boy?' said its master. 'Me too. What you need is a bottle of milk and a beefsteak.'

After a search they moored in the dining-room of the Hôtel Afrikan and found solace for man and beast. At one table was a group of chief petty officers, at another a dozen seamen from the *Toledo* who hailed Kid Sprague with cordial invitations. They were tactless enough, however, to hurl rude jests at Moses Mahomet Ali and to insult him in the most scathing terms. Thereupon the sensitive Kid refused to sit with them and marched out to find more congenial company.

He was passing the gorgeous Indian shop of Mooloo Brothers, dealers in ivory, amber, ebony, jewels, and silk-stuffs, when he caught sight of Machinist's Mate Martin Donnelly looming at a counter. Here was a man of human feelings who would be kind to poor little Moses Mahomet Ali. Likewise, Kid Sprague was beginning to feel lonesome and forlorn himself. He went in, therefore, and found Donnelly engaged in windy argument with one of the suave, dusky Mooloo Brothers.

Their animated gestures were aimed at the rows of elephants, most cunningly carved from ebony, with ivory tusks and toe-nails, whole families and herds of them. Mr. Mooloo, a Hindoo of a nervous temperament, was evidently dismayed by the pugnacious countenance and muscular frame of his cus-

tomer, but stuck valiantly to his prices and was not easy to intimidate. Donnelly smiled a welcome as he turned to say:

'Hello, Kid! This bird is the prize robber of the whole cruise, and that's goin' some. What have you got there? A dog? Why, sure it's a dog. Don't let any of those bimboes on the ship tell you it's some kind of a Chinese joss. Poor little beach-hound! How come? Did you buy him?'

'No, found him,' was the grateful reply. 'Say, but he has got sand in his gizzard. You ought to hear him bark. Do you honestly like him, Martin?'

'I'll say so, right off the bat, Kid. I was sort of lammed around myself when I was a tyke and had blamed few friends. Since then I've been better than I looked, if I do say it myself. A big brute with an ugly mug, like me, gets misunderstood, Kid. They give me the reputation of a ten-minute egg and I ain't that way a-tall. Now help me pry an elephant loose from this Bombay burglar.'

'I am no burglah, sar, I beg you excuse me,' courteously broke in Mr. Mooloo, rubbing his hands. 'You ask to buy one beeg elephant, ver' beeg. It take one man t'ree week to make a elephant like that. I ask you pay me seexty rupees — ver' small price — speshul for American navee men.'

'You cut my throat. It's plain murder,' rumbled Donnelly. 'Forty rupees and be damned to you. And you'll be strippin' the shirt from my back, at that.'

Kid Sprague exclaimed with delight:

'Put it to him, old-timer. They marked up all the prices when they heard we were coming. All Americans are millionaires, I don't think. Listen, Martin, what do you want this whale of an elephant for? He stands more'n a foot high and I bet he weighs like so much lead.'

Donnelly shook his close-cropped head and the perspiration pattered to the floor. Patiently he explained:

'It's a present for my dear old mother in Bridgeport, Kid. I promised to find her something elegant to put on the parlor mantel. I bought her a silver lace shawl in Cairo, and leopard skins for a coat at Mombasa, but I'm still shy the piece-of-resistance.'

The Kid smothered a chuckle and his face was demure as he exclaimed:

'When the old lady gets dolled up with a silver lace shawl and a leopard-skin coat, and that big elephant to lead out on a string, she will be one sporty dame, believe me.'

Donnelly looked rather troubled as he replied:

'Maybe you're right. She ain't so young as she was once. Never mind, I'll buy her some ostrich feathers at Cape Town. But this he-elephant does belong on the mantelpiece, Kid. There is no such elephant in the whole State of Connecticut. Now, Brother Mooloo, guess again and have a heart. Forty rupees — thirteen dollars in honest money — or I'll tell the whole ship's company to lay off your place.'

'Feefty rupees, sar,' protested Mr. Mooloo, in deeply injured tones.

'Then take your wall-eyed, left-footed elephant,' thundered the machinist's mate, 'and I hope you fall over him and break your neck.' He turned his back and was half way to the street when the Hindoo merchant sighed aloud, like one bereaved:

'Forty rupees, sar, and it is making a geeft of the elephant to your honorable old mothah. I do it for nobody but you, sah, navee man. It ees mos' lucky elephant. What you do when you wish good luck ees stroke his back and —'

'What's that?' cried Donnelly in an eager voice. 'Why didn't you say so in the first place, stupid? Stroke his back and what?'

'T'ree time you rub hees back,' solemnly affirmed Mr. Mooloo, 'and you pray, "*Wallah*," "*Wallah*," "*Wallah!*" This elephant he is bless' by the priest — beeg magic! Now you pay me feefty rupees?'

'Well, I guess it's worth it, Brother Mooloo. You may be a liar, but, on the other hand, I may be stakin' myself to fifty rupees' worth of luck. What's your idea, Kid? Don't I need it?'

'I'll say so, Martin. It's more sensible than buying Abyssinian Matheos for five hundred francs. I don't see how the elephant can tangle you up in as much trouble as that boy did. Still fretty about the jinx?'

'To some extent. Now, Kid, what do you want to buy for that girl of yours?'

'A string of ivory beads, but I was afraid of getting stung.'

'Huh! Mr. Mooloo won't cheat me. He knows better. Now act pretty, Brother, and break out something classy for the young man.'

'Yes, sar, I will show you strings of beads it takes one man t'ree week —'

'Can the patter,' sternly commanded Donnelly. 'I'll name the price.'

His masterful influence was potent to hasten the transaction. They were beautiful beads and undoubtedly genuine. Mr. Mooloo decided to run no chances of a return visit from this hairy-chested djinn of an American sailor. Kid Sprague stuffed the beads in his pocket and sallied happily forth with the weary Moses Mahomet Ali slumbering against his breast. The machinist's mate carried the burdensome elephant as if its weight were no more than a feather.

They halted outside. The sun had dropped low and the streets were in shadow. A cooling breeze came sweeping in from seaward. It was a foretaste of the blessed respite of nightfall.

'What's on your mind, Kid?' asked Donnelly. 'I don't feel like hitchin' up to a noisy bunch of rummies. And my own side-kickers have strayed off somewhere.'

'Let's go find the native bazaar,' suggested the youngster. 'I like to poke around and look for funny old junk. We can find chow along the line.'

'All set, boy,' agreed Donnelly. 'Has the pup been fed? Good. I'm glad I don't have to run a commissary for my elephant. Let's go.'

Comfortably they jogged in two rickshas which crowded close to a wall to let the Sultan of Zanzibar drive past in an open carriage with liveried attendants. They envied this bored, middle-aged gentleman not at all. In fact, they lolled back in their two-wheeled vehicles with a grander manner and more at ease than His Highness, Seyyid Khalifa, himself.

'Eleven o'clock liberty for you juicy young gobs,' shouted the machinist's mate. 'I think I'll be goin' off by then. I regret to remind myself that I'm on probation. But the night is still young, Kid, and there is time for adventures and things. It may turn out to be one of those Arabian nights you read about. I have a hunch. Me and you and Moses Mahomet Ali and the prize elephant!'

'Go as far as you like,' carelessly agreed William Sprague. 'But for the love of Mike, don't let me miss that eleven o'clock boat.'

VII

THESE random pilgrims from *U.S.S. Toledo* discovered much to amuse them while they idled among the dingy nooks and corners of the Arab quarter and bargained for queer trinkets, from earrings of hammered silver to inlaid ash-trays. They ate cakes and sweetmeats from the stalls in the streets, drank pink, sirupy sherbets, and were sublimely indifferent to dust and microbes. The dusk of the day found the shopkeepers closing the heavy shutters. The noisy crowds melted away. Soon this area of the city was almost deserted. Martin Donnelly shifted his ebony elephant from one shoulder to the other and sagaciously remarked:

'Let's go sit down somewhere, Kid. I'm leg-weary, and this elegant pet sort of drags me down on one side. He sure is hefty for his size.'

'Moses Mahomet Ali squirms a lot,' said young Sprague. 'He ought to be put down where he can sleep steady. What do you say to driving out to a real native village? The moon ought to come up pretty soon, and she is due to be one gorgeous night. It's a heap sight cooler than that infernal tea-kettle of a ship.'

Donnelly nodded assent. He was a sentimental man in spite of his forbidding appearance. They would find the pleasant-mannered natives and the thatched houses under the cocoanut palms by the light of the Zanzibar moon.

Fortune favored them in finding one solitary ricksha whose two-legged steed was wearily plodding homeward. He permitted himself to be chartered by the hour, after finding another coolie to push while he pulled. It was no light cargo, what with the massive machinist's mate and his solid elephant.

Progress was slow, with frequent halts when there was the slightest hill to climb. The two seafarers were not impatient. They smoked cheroots and admired the rising moon. A sense of peace and rest enfolded them. Moses Mahomet Ali slumbered in the bottom of the ricksha. Beside him stood the noble elephant with trunk upraised and ivory tusks gleaming, as though vigilantly on guard.

The excursion was suddenly interrupted. A wheel of the overloaded vehicle collapsed with a crash of splintered spokes. Donnelly rolled out on the back of his neck. Kid Sprague sprawled on top of him. The dejected coolie stood and cursed the ancestors of all rickshas. Blaming him for the disaster, the excited pup tried to bite his bare heels. Only the elephant maintained a composure dignified and unshaken.

'Adventures! You said it,' spluttered the Kid. 'Is this one of 'em, you big stiff? You ought to take your moonlight rides in a truck. See what you did to a perfectly good ricksha!'

'It does look as if we had expended it,' said the machinist's mate, brushing the dust from his eyes. 'It can never make port on one wheel. We have

broke down in mid-ocean, Kid, and no radio. Pipe the life-boat crew to muster, eh?'

'You can't laugh this off,' snarled the youngster. 'Two miles to walk back, if it's a step, and my shoes hurt. And I'm hungry again. Well, come on.'

'You don't have to lug this elephant,' sadly remarked Donnelly.

'I'll spell you with him,' replied the seaman, repenting of his ungraciousness. 'Oh, I don't mind it so much. It's a nice night and we'll have time for some chow at the hotel before we shove off.'

They trudged along the gleaming coral road. William Sprague felt ashamed to play the baby in the company of a shipmate whom no vicissitudes could daunt. Donnelly was whistling 'Yes, We Have No Bananas,' and presently they were singing it together. At the end of one hundred paces, and it made the journey shorter to count them, they exchanged the pup and the elephant.

'A stroll like this limbers you up, Kid. I don't get enough exercise aboard ship. Say, this country is a beautiful picture to look at. And it smells just like a spice factory. I wonder if Prohibition at home has hurt these clove plantations? There always used to be a little dish of 'em at one end of the bar. Seems as if something romantic might happen to us yet. The stage is all set for it.'

'Nothing to it, Martin. We can't lose your jinx. I don't know whether it is the flop-eared pup or the double-ended elephant.'

'Listen, William,' seriously replied the big one.

'Mr. Mooloo told me this elephant was all shot with good luck. All you have to do is stroke his back and say "*Wallah*," "*Wallah*," "*Wallah*" — three times, just like that. Too bad we forgot to stroke him before we signed on in that condemned ricksha.'

'Better do it now, Martin, before we get in another jam,' advised the Kid. 'Out here in the East they do pull off some stunts you can't explain, and maybe this Mooloo highbinder told the truth for once in his life.'

Accordingly they set the elephant down and knelt, with solemn countenances, to stroke its back while they chanted in unison, '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*.' Things were bound to break right, hopefully ventured Donnelly. In a sanguine mood they toiled into the outskirts of Zanzibar city. They took their bearings from the beach beyond which they could see the *Toledo* at anchor, with a string of electric lights brilliantly illuminating the gangway.

'Not yet,' said the machinist's mate. 'Join the Navy and see the world.'

Here and there the moonlight filtered into the streets they trod with tired feet. Moving in this soft obscurity, they found it soothing to lift their voices in the harmonious strains of the blue jacket's litany:

'Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Grant no other sailor take
My shoes or socks before I wake.
Lord, guard me in my slumber
And keep my hammock on its number;

May no clews or lashings break,
And let me down before I wake.
Keep me safely in Thy sight,
And grant no fire drill to-night.
And in the morning let me wake,
Breathing scents of sirloin steak.
Grant the time may swiftly fly
When I myself shall rest on high
In a snowy feather bed,
Where I long to lay my head.
Far away from all these scenes
And the smell of half-baked beans . . .'

'There's some more verses to it,' said William Sprague, 'but you had better throttle down, Martin. The fairway between these houses isn't wide enough. Those bass notes of yours rattle the windows.'

It seemed a long, long march in the direction of the Hôtel Afrikan. Also they were not at all sure of the course. However, the jinx had been apparently lifted by means of the magic incantation, for they discerned a lighted doorway that gleamed like a friendly beacon. The pace quickened. They could read the sign that swung above the pavement, 'Japanese Coffee Shop.' They halted to look in.

A front room with wicker chairs and tables, a vase of flowers, a painted screen, a gilded dragon writhing across a wall! Exquisitely neat and inviting! Through an arch they had a vista of a garden beyond, dwarfed trees, a trellis hung with wistaria, a fountain tinkling. A long table and a tray of dishes hinted at a menu more substantial than coffee.

'Here's where we drop the mud-hook and take on fuel,' exclaimed Seaman Sprague.

'Stand by to secure engines,' agreed the machinist's mate. 'It looks like Heaven, boy. Geisha girls for tired business men, maybe. Zanzibar is looking up.'

In they tramped and a Japanese woman came from the garden to greet them. She bobbed courteously, with a broad smile of welcome. She was middle-aged, strands of gray in the hair rolled smoothly back, a motherly person and an agreeable hostess. The visage of Martin Donnelly appeared so truculent that she stepped back with a quick intake of breath, but his gentle voice assured her.

'Good evening, ma'am. I was at Yokohama and Kobe one cruise, and there's Jap friends of mine there. Can you rustle us a man's size feed?'

'Ah, I am please',' she twittered. 'Poor Yokohama, it is all smash' with earthquake. Americans give so much money to Japanese earthquake people! What you will have for supper — soup, fish, chicken, spuds, melon, bamboo shoots —'

'You do talk lovely English,' blissfully interrupted the Kid. 'Please bring the whole works and make it snappy.'

'You will come into the garden, please?' and she bowed again. 'It is cooler and more nice for eats.'

Into the garden they limped and discovered a shipmate seated at a small table. It was none other than Mr. Cassius Stackpole. Upon the table was a chessboard. He was studiously engaged. Opposite him and no less intent was a bearded Arab of his own age, a personage with a hooked nose, thin lips,

and an eye like a hawk. He was handsomely attired, the outer robe of dark blue silk, the *kanzu* of fine white cotton flowing from the neck to the ankles. Around his waist was a gold sash. Covering his head was the *kilemba* or turban of red and yellow stripes. A splendid emerald ring set in silver shone from the sinewy finger that hovered over the chessboard.

To find the chief pay clerk playing chess with this imposing Sheik or Aga, or whatever he might be, was not in the least surprising. He was devoted to this sedately intellectual pastime. And one was likely to meet him in the company of interesting individuals of various sorts whose acquaintance he had formed during previous voyages in naval vessels. The Japanese Coffee Shop was a quiet, attractive, and apparently respectable retreat.

As a warrant officer, Mr. Stackpole might regard a machinist's mate and a seaman, second class, as not quite in his set, but he could afford to ignore the question of rank in the seclusion of this walled garden.

'How are you, boys — glad to see you,' said he, rising from the chess table. 'Permit me to introduce my friend, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin. I knew him out here when I was in the old *Brooklyn*. He is a top-notcher, a cousin of the Sultan, and owns one of the largest clove plantations on the island. He talks Arabic and Swahili, and a little English. We manage to get on fairly well.'

They shook hands with the ornate clove planter and kinsman of royalty who bowed and resumed his

preoccupied attitude at the chessboard. Mr. Stackpole, chin in his hand, looked up to say after moving a pawn:

'The Jap woman will send out for beer if you want it. She has no license. I brought along a flask of cognac to lace my coffee with. It does brighten you up, but be careful of the mixture or the top of your head will fly off.'

It had so brightened Mr. Stackpole that after three more moves Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin had to admit himself checkmated. They rested and gravely conversed in a singular medley of phrases. Presently a Japanese girl came in to set the places, and another appeared with the soup. They were quaint little creatures, giggling whenever Kid Sprague cast a merry eye at them. He deferred chatting with them because he was a youth who could find little joy in life so long as the tooth of hunger gnawed and his shoes felt much too small for his feet.

Lusty trenchermen were these two guests from the scout cruiser *Toledo* and they seldom looked up from their plates while the Japanese damsels fluttered in attendance. Their childish sense of humor was tickled by the sad-eyed, splay-footed pup and the majestic ebony elephant. Both animals were carefully put to bed beneath the table.

When the chairs had been shoved back and the coffee properly laced with cognac, Mr. Cassius Stackpole moved over to say:

'Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin is anxious to learn to play poker. Are you agreeable? I suppose we could use

a peck or so of those big copper anna pieces for chips.'

'You may vouch for him as a perfect gentleman, but he looks to me like a Barbary pirate,' observed Martin Donnelly. 'Don't you start no arguments with him over a deck of cards, Mr. Stackpole. He carries an arsenal under that white nightie. And there is room in his sleeves for all kinds of aces.'

'Make it a small limit,' said William Sprague, 'and give me a clear track for a quick get-away.'

'You misjudge my friend, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin,' declared the chief pay clerk, in oracular tones. 'I can promise you that he will start nothing rough. He is not that kind. And the last thing in the world I want is a disturbance of any kind.'

They cleared the long table and distributed the stacks of copper coins. As a wise precaution, the machinist's mate hoisted his elephant to the table, rubbed its back, and murmured '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*.' It was soon comprehended that Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin was an apt, not to say ardent, pupil. He suggested making the stakes worth while and dragged from his raiment an enormous roll of bank-notes. Uneasily Donnelly whispered behind his hand:

'Here comes trouble, Kid. If we crab his game, he may get mad. And if we trail along with him, he'll have a streak of beginner's luck and leave the Navy all flattened out. I don't want to injure Mr. Stackpole's feelin's, but I wish something would happen to break up this game.'

His earnest desire was granted. Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin was in no wise responsible. He played the part of a spectator. His poker education was cut short by an intrusion unforeseen and calamitous. In from the street surged a party of British blue-jackets whose cap-ribbons bore the letters, *H.M.S. Spitfire*. There were six of them, by Martin Donnelly's hasty count. At least three were stalwart men and no spindling recruits. They invaded the innocent sociability of the Japanese garden in a loud, overbearing manner. It was to be inferred that they were not altogether pleased with Zanzibar and were resolved to correct its manners and its morals. If the provocation offered, they might erase it from the map and parade among the ruins.

One exception should be noted. This was a scrawny man who hung back and displayed no bellicose intentions. In him Seaman Sprague, U.S.N., recognized Coxswain Torbett whom he had unintentionally deserted while in chase of the orphan mutt, Moses Mahomet Ali. At sight of the boyish Yank, the coxswain edged forward and hoarsely explained to his mates of the *Spitfire:*

''Ere's my bleedin' pal from the *Toledo*. It's all right. Introjuce yourselves and ask 'im and his friends to 'ave one with us.'

The British tar with the widest pair of shoulders, whose eyes were red and slightly askew, returned in accents harsh and deep:

'You're a dirty little liar, Torbett. The only Yank that's all right is a dead one. That's my motto

to-night. Didn't one of 'em hit me behind the ear with a cocoanut a little bit ago and near bash my bally brains out? And for that? Because I tipped his funny little round hat over his blinkin' eyes. I'll introjuce myself — Battlin' Jack Goddard, torpedo gunner, that was heavy-weight champion of the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow. An' I can whip any three Yanks that ever sailed in a Yankee tin-pot of a scout cruiser.'

This valorous speech was like tossing a bomb into the pretty, moonlit garden. His companions tried to argue with the web-footed champion of the Grand Fleet. They were obviously reluctant to declare war as abruptly as this. Contemptuously he brushed them aside. Coxswain Torbett slipped nearer Kid Sprague and tremulously whispered:

''E is in a frightful temper and it was 'im that egged the others on to be nawsty. They're afraid of 'im. If you lads don't mind humorin' the big blighter a bit, it may blow over.'

Mr. Cassius Stackpole was upon his feet, unruffled and benignant, prepared to pour the oil of oratory on these troubled waters. The sight of his shoulder straps should have subdued the champion, but he glared wickedly and burst out:

'No silly warrant officer with a fat stummick can tell *me* wot's wot. I don't like this old geezer's face. I ought to poke it.'

'Men, this will not do. You are making a public nuisance of yourselves,' admonished the chief pay clerk. 'There should be the best of feeling between

our two navies. We worked and fought together like brothers during the Great War. I enjoyed the pleasure of luncheon with your warrant officers on the *Spitfire* to-day. We toasted the President and the King.'

The champion let his little red eyes rove up and down the comfortably cushioned frame of Chief Pay Clerk Cassius Stackpole, as though calculating just where to plant the fatal blow. Sneeringly he retorted:

'Drank up all the beer, eh — you gabby old guzzler? Just what I might ha' expected. Stow your lip, Spitfires. Don't interrupt me. I won't clear for action if the Yanks 'll fetch us lashin's of beer. That's the word!'

Machinist's Mate Donnelly had been standing behind his chair, the back of which he grasped with both hands. As a weapon it was too fragile to please him. His heavy body was thrust forward. The muscles of his gaunt cheeks were contracted. The bushy brows met in a black scowl. Instead of the loose-jointed awkwardness of his usual posture, the powerful body was tense. Licking his lips, he spoke in a slow, hard voice unfamiliar to his two shipmates.

'Stand by for orders, Kid. We are going to bust out of this and take "Old Man" Stackpole with us. Fetch beer for this damn Limie rough-neck? I don't think.'

VIII

As the saying is, Mr. Cassius Stackpole had never seen a shot fired in anger. Even the World War had stranded him in the Norfolk Navy Yard where he had made himself indispensable in handling millions of dollars' worth of material and supplies in the vast expansion of the service afloat. He had been denied the distinction of being torpedoed in a transport or bombed at a French or British base. The background of his orderly existence was decorated with no purple patches.

On this very day in Zanzibar, it now occurred to him, he had been regarding the spirit of rampant, impressionable Youth with a kind of wistful envy. As he surveyed the scene in the Japanese garden, he became aware that he was about to be flung out of his rut in a violent manner. He had the retentive memory of a reader and student. Swiftly there paraded through his mind the flamboyant phrases he had so recently perused.

Zanzibar is a courtesan, whimsical, gay, sullen, presenting many aspects. Warm, rich, beautiful, concealing with dissembling art its sinister spots, it lavishes its charms, intoxicates with its beauty, smothers with its opulence, or suddenly, after a smouldering silence, it renders itself with rage. The screaming tornado rips its verdure to tatters . . .

'Well, this situation is whimsical, not to say

sullen,' murmured Mr. Stackpole, 'and I should call it an impending tornado.'

He felt no sense of trepidation. It was tremendously interesting. The emotion uppermost was a certain annoyance that the militant Martin Donnelly should mention taking 'Old Man' Stackpole with them as though it were a filial duty.

The spirit of young Seaman Sprague was willing, but for the life of him he couldn't see how they were going to get out with their colors flying. Coxswain Torbett was presumably neutral, but this left the odds at two against five, because, with all due respect to the dignified merits of Mr. Stackpole, he would be a total loss, in the Kid's critical opinion, when the free-for-all began. There was also Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, but he could not be expected to unlimber his arsenal in an international affair between cousins of the same infidel breed.

William Sprague gulped. His heart was thumping. He was no veteran bluejacket trained by experience to fight his way to the beach in foreign ports. However, as he said to himself, this looked like an elegant chance to learn.

Champion Jack Goddard, late of the Grand Fleet, hesitated to force the issue, although he had magnificently delivered his ultimatum. Something restrained him. Two factors, to be precise. One was the instantaneous readiness with which Martin Donnelly had harkened to the call of battle stations. He looked like an ugly customer who was not making his début in such episodes as this. The other

factor was the bearded Arab gentleman who had remained seated and was indifferently flicking the pack of cards with one hand. He gazed at the British disturbers with open disdain and ironical contempt. His right hand, as was noted, remained hidden in the folds of the blue silk robe. The champion surmised that the hand was not empty. A few inches of cold steel driven between a man's ribs would not improve his health.

There ensued, for these reasons, a long moment of delay and silence. The Japanese woman flitted into the front room and back again. Her worn features were waxen with apprehension. The two girls had vanished into the kitchen.

The crisis was precipitated, the deadlock broken, by that homely but beloved bit of canine flotsam known as Moses Mahomet Ali. He had been aroused from his nap beneath the table by the noise of heavy feet and loud voices. Out he scrambled, on the *qui vive*, to quell the unseemly riot. Sturdily he emitted what was intended to be a series of intimidating barks.

The shrill commotion drew the attention of Champion Jack Goddard. The pup ran at him, ears acock, tail up, intelligently deducing that here was an enemy to be attacked and driven off. He snapped at the man's ankles, yelping in a frenzied manner, and was resolved to die in his tracks if it had to be done.

Kid Sprague lunged forward to rescue his pet. He was an instant too late. The champion raised a

heavy service boot and viciously kicked at little Moses Mahomet Ali. The pup soared like a football and alighted in a flower bed. By no means knocked out, he raised his voice in pained, indignant accents, *ki, yi, yi!* The Kid rushed to the assault with no other weapons than his clenched fists which were swinging in wild circles. Jack Goddard laughed and knocked him over the table with one deft blow.

The other Spitfires charged into the fray as one man, barring Coxswain Torbett who retreated to an oleander bush and made pacific sounds which nobody heard. One Britisher prudently made for 'Old Man' Stackpole who could lay hands on nothing more effective than a flower pot filled with lilies. This he hurled at close range. It smashed upon the hard head of his foeman who grunted and clapped both hands to his crown. This gave the substantial chief pay clerk time to dodge behind the fountain while he sought other missiles. He was, at heart, a courageous man, but better at firing broadsides than repelling boarders.

And so these two dodged around the fountain, playing tag at full speed, until Mr. Stackpole, whirling suddenly, bumped full-tilt into his pursuer and floored him by sheer tonnage and momentum. It was proof that the tactics of ramming in naval warfare are not so obsolete as generally supposed. With an agility that did him great credit, Mr. Stackpole dropped upon the prostrate Briton's chest and used his ears like jug handles to bang his head against the

flagstones. One unit of the enemy's squadron was definitely out of action.

Meanwhile Martin Donnelly had advanced to meet the heavy-weight champion, not in a flurried rush, but with a wary caution bred of various encounters in the past. The other Spitfires subsided to look on. This might be a rare bit of fighting. The raw-boned Yank was a two-fisted man and no mistake, while this Jack Goddard, a loud-mouthed bully by nature, was not loved by his shipmates.

Dazed and winking, Kid Sprague was nursing his jaw and trying to stand firm on his legs. He yearned to mix it up for another round, but he was not yet ready. Mr. Stackpole occupied a reserved seat, as it were, for the man underneath him required little attention.

The British battler was a graceful man for his weight and inches, and light on his feet. He handled himself like one skilled in the ring. The American machinist's mate, strong but much the slower of the two, was untutored in the art of boxing. He was at a disadvantage. This was apparent. But he came on, steady and taut.

The haughty Arab personage, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, withdrew his right hand from inside his robe. It might have been conjectured that he had concluded to take no active part in the performance. A brawl had resolved itself into a duel of pluck and strength. This was, in a way, no concern of his. His friend, Mr. Cassius Stackpole, was in no need of

succor but seemed to be doing quite well for himself, with a British sailor as a cushion.

With a stately bow in farewell, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin strode from the Japanese garden and was seen no more.

IX

By all the rules of fiction, the Yankee hero should have cleaned up the place single-handed, undaunted by vastly superior forces. The truth is, however, that he had bitten off more than he could chew. This he was sensible enough to realize for himself. His one hope was in waiving the technique of pugilism and making a rough-and-tumble party of it. This meant ducking the educated fists of Champion Jack Goddard and clinching as soon as possible. With this in mind, Martin Donnelly dived headlong into the fray.

The Briton was anticipating such procedure. He was quick and nimble. Stepping aside, he hooked an arm around the Yankee's neck and pounded his face with a sledge-hammer right. There was no holding Donnelly in such a vise as this. He wrenched himself free, whirled in his tracks, and struck out with both hands. They were awkward blows, but Goddard was not set to parry them. One smote him on the neck. It was like being hit with a club. He swayed, dropped to one knee, and seemed confused. Instantly Donnelly was on top of him. It was his unexpected chance.

They wrestled furiously. The English bluejacket was resourceful. Somehow he squirmed from under, tore himself loose, and found room to lurch to his feet. The machinist's mate, panting, with a bloody

nose, was slower to recover himself. Not yet braced, he was endeavoring to protect his face when Goddard let drive for the body, a terrific smash to the heart and another to the ribs.

Donnelly groaned. His gaunt body quivered with pain. His features were distorted, bewildered. The spirit was still willing but, for the moment, his energies were benumbed.

Until now, Seaman William Sprague had been standing aside. He was feeling fit again. However, with the instinct of fair play, he was willing to let the pair of them fight it out. There was a mental reservation. He would mix in if his comrade was getting the worst of it. The time had arrived. He said to himself that Martin Donnelly was about to be knocked for a row of depth-bombs. With a strident war-whoop, the limber youngster made a flank attack on the champion of the Grand Fleet.

It was the signal for the other Britons to abandon the rôle of bystanders. The situation now consisted of two Toledos against four Spitfires. In a ruction of this kind the rules of chivalry were apt to go by the board.

With the odds against him, Martin Donnelly was in no mood for surrender. Retreating to the long table, he snatched up the ebony elephant. As a mascot the beast had failed to deliver the goods, but he might be made useful in an emergency. That splendid trunk of his was upraised in a warlike curve. It served as a solid handle for Donnelly to grasp in his right hand. He had a bludgeon such as only a

powerful man could have wielded. It was his intention to clear a path from the garden to the street.

Chief Pay Clerk Stackpole was quick to comprehend this plan of operation. He abandoned his prostrate prisoner and maneuvered to follow close in Martin Donnelly's devastating wake. Kid Sprague hastened to salvage his precious Moses Mahomet Ali from the flower bed in which he had elected to remain.

It looked as if the tide of circumstances had turned. The British front was broken. The Spitfires showed symptoms of panic retreat at the sight of the infuriated Yank and his brandished elephant. To collide with that ebony pile-driver was one way of inviting a burial party and 'Taps' on a bugle.

Even the champion of the Grand Fleet had never fought a bout with an elephant. He was a game warrior, nevertheless, and he stood his ground while his companions wavered. Then twenty-odd pounds of ebony hit him, with a dynamic Donnelly at one end of it. The champion offered no more opposition, not the slightest. In fact, he was stretched so still and flat that it appeared as though he might be dreaming of English pubs and bar-maids on the Old Kent Road. At a casual glance, he was a complete ruin.

Martin Donnelly waved his elephant on high and steamed ahead at full speed like an armored flagship. In close formation behind him were Mr. Cassius Stackpole, William Sprague, and the black-and-tan pup. It had the semblance of an impressively

honorable exit, with the Stars and Stripes still waving o'er the brave and the free.

These indications were misleading. The adventurous night, for which Martin Donnelly had yearned, had not yet drawn to a close. The Japanese Coffee Shop was destined to stage no more than the prologue. That stately Arab gentleman, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, had not remained altogether aloof and detached. A praiseworthy solicitude for the welfare of his opponent at the chessboard had prompted him to summon the Zanzibar police. The British Administration was excellent. Its native police were numerous and well drilled. When it became necessary to muster several of them at a given point, they were there. Infused with the spirit of modernity, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin had made use of a telephone.

X

THE American sailormen were about to gain the arched doorway leading out of the garden when the brown, turbaned policemen in khaki trotted in at the double. They were armed. It was out of the question to persuade them to fall back by means of an ebony elephant. This much Martin Donnelly was quick to figure out for himself. Here was very stormy weather. The Zanzibar cops would lock up all hands, he reflected, and let them explain later. And, to begin with, they would be prejudiced in favor of the British tars.

'Full speed astern on both engines,' roared the machinist's mate. 'Then turn and beat it out the back way.'

Obediently the Yankee cruisers retired into the garden, moving swiftly and setting their rudders hard over. This reversed order placed the chief pay clerk in the lead, with Donnelly prepared to cover the evolution as a rear guard.

The police delayed to examine the slumbering champion of the Grand Fleet. Ah, ha, he seemed to be very dead! Was this a murder? During the brief interval, Mr. Cassius Stackpole broke for the kitchen, a small tiled building set against the back wall of the enclosure. There was no time for him to address the audience in measured accents.

Kid Sprague was at his heels. Martin Donnelly

retreated more slowly. He was stubborn and indignant. He still clutched the elephant by its sturdy trunk.

His two shipmates vanished into the kitchen. The Sikh sergeant of police yelled to his men. They raced after him as he ran across the garden to reach the kitchen. He drew his pistol and sharply cried 'Halt.' Martin Donnelly spun about and raised his arms, but not in token of capitulation. He could secure a better purchase on the ebony trunk by gripping it with both hands.

He paused at the threshold of the kitchen door. Inside he could hear his comrades floundering about. Then, with superb deliberation, he hurled the ponderous elephant. This corner of the garden was in shadow. The sergeant of police could not see clearly. He had no more than a dim glimpse of a black object whirling end over end, with curious little flickers of white.

Ebony and ivory from Zanzibar! Romantic words, these, but the sergeant had reason to call them misapplied.

With a loud 'whoof' he clapped both hands to his lean stomach. He seemed to be propelled backward before he sat down in a manner curiously violent. It was a phenomenon that perplexed the other policemen. They hastened to gather about their fallen leader and to lift him to his feet.

One of them stumbled over an ebony elephant which had fallen upon its four stout legs and stood with trunk curled high in a menacing, unterrified

attitude. Donnelly would have told you that it had been worth while, after all, to stroke its rugged back and utter the mystic '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*.' As a friend in need, the elephant had redeemed himself.

Having chucked this ballast overboard, Donnelly delayed not his departure. As he darted into the kitchen, he recalled a line of an old sea chantey that fitted the case. It was time to leave her, bullies, leave her. Mr. Stackpole had blundered into a shelf and knocked off the candle-stick. The room was in darkness. Kid Sprague, kicking a chair aside, found one of the pretty little Japanese girls hiding behind it and snatched a farewell kiss. It was taking sentiment on the jump.

Donnelly had shrewdly guessed that a door might lead from the kitchen through the garden wall into an alley beyond. He plunged to find it amid a prodigious clatter of falling pots and pans. From a pocket he jerked out a tiny flash-lamp. With a long swoop he upturned a table as a barrier to hamper pursuit. Then he let the beam of light rove along the wall. Hurrah, there was a door of plank strapped with hammered iron-work! He wrenched it open. He shoved the others through ahead of him. They heard a policeman fall over the table and swear earnestly in his own vernacular.

'On your way, buddies,' urged Donnelly. 'I'll join you in a jiffy.'

He had slammed the door behind him and was fumbling with the clumsy latch. A wink of his

flash-lamp and he spied an iron staple set in the masonry. Ripping off his stout leather belt, he twisted it around the latch and buckled the ends together through the staple. This would delay pulling the door open from the inside.

He galloped after the other fugitives. The white-clad figure of the chief pay clerk was as conspicuous as a lighthouse. He was pounding along at a rapid walk, with Kid Sprague imploring him to hit it up. Donnelly overtaking them, they veered into a tortuous, unlighted byway and presently turned again.

'We'll do a couple more zigzags,' said the machinist's mate, 'and those ginger-colored cops will have the devil's own time to dope out which way we went. If they don't break out through that kitchen door, they are due to pile out the front way or over the wall. What time is it, Kid? My watch got heart failure and quit on me. Too much excitement for Mr. Ingersoll's expensive chronometer.'

'Twelve minutes to eleven, Martin,' was the doleful reply. 'Just time to catch that last liberty boat if we run all the way to the beach.'

'But we don't know which way to run, Kid, till we find a range. And if we start leggin' it through the streets, we spill the beans. What we did to the Zanzibar finest and the Royal Navy will sure stir up one hornet's nest.'

'Right you are,' observed Cassius Stackpole. 'They will send out a general alarm at once. And I'm blessed if I can sprint very far. I am not built for it. Getting off in the last boat is not vital to me, as

far as that is concerned. I make my own liberty hours. I could go to the hotel for the night, but it would be very easy to identify me from description, and the idea of being arrested by the local police is peculiarly distasteful. In fact, I can't stand for it at all. The ship has what it miscalls a sense of humor — you understand, boys.'

'It does sound like putting Daniel Webster or William Jennings Bryan in jail,' gravely agreed the machinist's mate. 'And they haven't quit joshing you about that Abyssinian shaver that set me back five hundred francs. On the level, Mr. Stackpole, this whole proposition don't look one bit good to me. These snappy Sikh bobbies will be sure to head us off at the beach. We riled 'em, I'll say we did. That sergeant is on the repair list. I shouldn't wonder if he had to be surveyed and condemned. My good old elephant packed a powerful wallop.'

'And you crowned the champeen of the Grand Fleet,' added William Sprague. 'He certainly did pass out pretty. S'pose you finished him?'

'No such luck. You can't knock a Limie's brains out. They ain't there. Well, my brave lads, we miss that boat unless we move along faster than this. And you can't afford to lose it, Kid. Your relations with the division officer are strained, as they say in the diplomatic service. As for me, I have to step so careful ever since we left Djibuti that I could walk on eggs without crackin' a shell.'

Mr. Stackpole had no comment to offer. At the moment he could think of nothing to say, but no

longer had he reason to complain that life had lost its flavor. Uneasily vigilant, they advanced in what was assumed to be the direction of the beach. If capture was inevitable, they much preferred to fall into the hands of their own shore patrol. Their heroic eruption in the garden of the Japanese Coffee Shop might result in a deck court, but they would be dealt with aboard their own ship.

This sounded even attractive when compared with the fate of being locked up in Zanzibar and held for trial before an English magistrate. The public scandal was appalling to contemplate. Besides this, the city was celebrating the visit of His Majesty's light cruiser *Spitfire*. The streets were bedecked with flags. There was an elaborate programme of dinners, dances, picnics, and sports which included boxing bouts. And the heavy-weight champion of the Grand Fleet had been temporarily retired by a Yankee machinist mate. Zanzibar justice was most unlikely to be tempered with mercy.

'I am shy my expensive elephant that was a present for my dear old mother,' grumbled Donnelly. 'It's hard to decide whether he was a blessing or a curse. I'll have to think it over. Look what he let us in for to-night. Of course he did some nice work there at the wind-up, but I had to show him how.'

'You had him darned well trained on such short notice,' said Seaman Sprague. 'But our only original mascot turned out to be my sandy pup. Honest, he'll pull us through yet. Give him a chance.'

The dialogue seemed frivolous to the dignified

chief pay clerk. He had not yet adjusted himself to the bewildering shifts of fortune. The present plight seemed an extraordinary sequel to the meditative society of Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin with a chessboard between them. If this escapade should become known, the warrant officers' mess-room would be simply impossible. Mr. Cassius Stackpole could concoct no plausible alibi. He had been in the thick of it and there were witnesses to prove that he had played a very active part. He murmured aloud:

'During all my years in the service I have never—'

'It's never too late to learn, Mr. Stackpole,' said Martin Donnelly, 'and the night is still young. Unless I miss my guess, there is more to come.'

'S-s-sh,' warned William Sprague. 'If that isn't a Hindoo cop under the awning yonder, I'll eat him.'

Mr. Stackpole shivered and halted in his tracks. The vague figure moved from beneath the awning and advanced in their direction. They wheeled into a cross-street and trod softly. Their nerves were easily startled. As rapidly as possible they lost themselves in a maze of silent buildings. There they waited for some little time. Kid Sprague dismally looked at his watch. Eleven o'clock! They fancied they could hear the put-put of a motor launch. That would be the last liberty boat.

'It scuppers you, Kid,' said Donnelly. 'You are on the report again, no matter what happens.'

'I never thought that old ship would look good to me, Martin. Gee, but I just love the Navy. Here,

you and Mr. Stackpole sit tight in that tumble-down old stone shack across the road while I scout along the beach. Maybe I can dodge the police and find a shore boat to take us off. The sooner I get aboard the less time I get marked for overstayin' liberty. And this town is mighty unhealthy for all three of us. I don't know about the fever, but it gives me chills, if cold feet are a symptom. Take care of little Moses Mahomet Ali for me. He sure did get off to a rough start as a bluejacket.'

The Kid tiptoed away and disappeared in a furtive manner. With this opportunity for action, he actually began to enjoy himself again. There was a certain heady zest in trying to elude the snares that had been set for them. He managed to skulk unobserved until he could see the nearest strip of shining beach and the stone steps leading down to a small landing pier. The *Toledo's* launches had used another quay, several hundred feet distant from this one, where the water was deeper at low tide.

From a secluded position, William Sprague scrutinized both these landing-places and the road that connected them. The moonlight flooded the scene with a radiant illumination. In restless silver ripples the quiescent surf washed the sand. The shadows of the palms were etched black and sharp. The watchful American sailor was able to count as many as five men near the quays or on the road between them. They were avoiding the moonlight as much as possible, but William's sharp eyes had no trouble in searching them out. Dubiously he stroked his

nose and shook his head. Things were coming entirely too fast for him.

To hide in the city all night meant almost certain discovery and arrest in the morning. No American bluejackets on lawful errands would be straying about until after the liberty hour of one o'clock in the afternoon.

'The dice couldn't roll worse,' he said to himself. 'Here is where I kiss the beach good-bye. It's all cluttered up with cops. And it will take a wiser guy than I am to keep out of jail.'

XI

William Sprague resumed his stealthy march, choosing another route back to his beleaguered comrades. He disliked crossing open spaces. The lurking man-hunters on the beach had agitated him. Law and order in Zanzibar were not to be trifled with. A circuitous, cat-footed promenade led him across a narrow-gauge railroad track among the warehouses of the harbor-side. A little way beyond were two or three sidings and a number of absurdly small freight and passenger cars. This looked like the equipment of a toy transportation system.

The weary seaman stumbled over the ties to find shelter, for a certain distance, between the cars. The police were unlikely, he thought, to rummage in this quarter. Perhaps, as a last resort, the three refugees might crawl into an empty car and snatch a few hours of sleep while they waited for something to turn up.

Presently William Sprague stopped and stared. He was a young man suddenly wide awake. An inspiration, the genius of a forlorn hope, had hit him squarely between the eyes. His feet no longer dragged as he hurried along the platform of a clove warehouse, stole through an open shed half-filled with sacks of rice, and so fled into the shadows of the nearest street. Unmolested he approached the roofless, ruined dwelling where he had left the others. Martin Donnelly ventured out to meet him.

'What luck, Kid? Any open water, or is the channel blocked?'

'Corked as tight as a bottle, Martin. You couldn't even shove the pup through. I saw the ship. That's all. Listen, where is Mr. Stackpole?'

'As quiet and solemn as any other antique in Zanzibar,' soberly answered the machinist's mate. 'He acts sort of overcome. I wish I had a jolt of coffee and cognac for him. It is his self-respect that's all shot to hell. He just can't imagine himself gettin' this way. I tell him he ought to know better than to let himself be seduced into a chess game with a high-class Arab pirate. It was suspicious company that led him into this six-reeler. I dunno as Bill Hart ever shot his way out with an ebony elephant.'

They groped inside the desolated walls and came upon the chief pay clerk who had removed his white coat and was using it as a pillow. He was saving his energies for the next act, whatever that might be. The Kid's discouraging report caused him to exclaim:

'I thought as much. From what I have seen of the police of Eastern ports, we had better steer very clear of them. Frankly, boys, I am up a tree. In all my long experience —'

'That's all right, sir,' broke in William. 'New stunts keep a man freshened up. Otherwise you are liable to get ossified. My sporty old dad took a jump in a parachute when he was past forty. Now let's get down to brass tacks. If we can sneak out of

town a few miles, we can find a fishing village, can't we? We saw them when we came into the harbor from sea. And we can hire a boat to pull us off to the ship without going anywhere near this hostile Zanzibar town.'

'But we are too dead to walk it,' objected Donnelly. 'When that big English bimbo smacked me in the ribs, he started some of my rivets. I feel lame and sore. And Mr. Stackpole would have to be mounted on casters and pushed. The excitement has wore him all out. He can't do walkin' matches all over this silly island.'

'My feet don't fit either, Martin. Now pay attention, for Heaven's sake. I am only a poor young gob on his first cruise, but maybe I'm not as dumb as I look. I've got something to show you. No false alarm, honest. We are desperate men. If you'll take a chance, we can pull this thing off.'

'You can't scare me, Kid. What's the grand idea? I showed you all my best tricks at the Japanese Coffee Shop. Show a leg, Mr. Stackpole. Rise and shine. The infant aims to take us in tow.'

They permitted the infant to guide them over the course he had taken, down to the railway tracks and the cars strung on the sidings. They stole to this hiding place like terrified men, frequently glancing over their shoulders. Somewhere off to the right they heard a shrill, metallic whistle. The police were engaged in combing the city according to a method of their own.

What Seaman Sprague had to exhibit was a dwarf

locomotive of an English pattern which had been switched from the main line to rest for the night. It was resplendent with polished brass-work. Instead of an enclosed cab, there was a driver's platform. A slight noise of hissing steam was audible. The boiler was hot to the touch.

Martin Donnelly climbed on board. The furnace door was open to cool the fire which had been quite recently banked. The experienced machinist's mate poked it with a bar. He broke up the surface layer of gray cinders and found a bed of live coals underneath. He spat on his hands. The expression of his rough-hewn visage was no longer melancholy. With his pocket flash-light he examined the water-gauge and tested various valves and levers. Then he climbed to the ground and announced:

'They must ha' been shifting cars with her no more than an hour ago. It won't take me long to make steam. You two go hide under a tarpaulin on one of those dinkey flat-cars, so no watchman can spot you. I don't dare make a racket with a shovel, but I can feed her with lumps of coal and break 'em up with a bar. But I got to work quiet and easy. Does anybody happen to know where this pony railroad runs to? Not that I care a hoot. It's mere curiosity.'

'To Bu-bu-bu,' promptly answered Mr. Stackpole.

'To what?' Donnelly ejaculated. 'Are you weepin' about something?'

'Bu-bu-bu,' insisted the other. 'A native village

seven or eight miles from here. They call the daily train service the Bu-bu-bu Express.'

'I didn't know you stuttered, Mr. Stackpole. All right! The Bu-bu-bu Express it is, and no stops to take on passengers. Yes, that native village ought to be connected with Zanzibar by rail. It sounds dippy enough. Run along now, and leave me coax this cute little coffee percolator. If the jinx will ease up on us, we run an extra trip to-night as a special.'

Meekly they did as they were told. If a sleepy watchman was in the railway yard, he came no nearer than the warehouses. Nor could he be blamed for failing to suspect that the locomotive might be borrowed by three distressed mariners from an American man-of-war. With a skill acquired in coal-burning ships of his earlier enlistments, Martin Donnelly nursed the fire and watched the needle of the steam-gauge begin to flicker. The miniature boiler was responsive. With no grades to climb until they should be clear of the city, Martin was of the opinion that she might roll along.

At length he footed it over to the tarpaulin and summoned his train crew. In silence they clambered between the furnace door and the water tank. Mr. Stackpole whispered:

'This line runs right through the heart of the city, Donnelly. The English people call it a cursed nuisance. They have to flatten themselves against the walls when they hear it coming.'

'So much the better for us, sir. The police will have some job to stop us. You and the Kid had

better scrooch as low as you can when we snort through Broadway, or whatever they call the main stem.'

'But the police may take pot-shots at you,' exclaimed Mr. Stackpole.

'Grand-stand stuff,' grinned the machinist's mate. 'Dare-devil Donnelly at the throttle! A gripping picture! All aboard! Anchors aweigh!'

The engineer jumped down to run to the switch points and set them for what he guessed to be the proper track. Then he swung himself to his station. Three minutes later the Bu-bu-bu Express, running light, rolled slowly out of the yard.

XII

It was unusual for the little locomotive to go rambling through the streets of Zanzibar at this hour of the night. However, the few natives who happened to be astir were not visibly excited. As was their habit, they scurried out of the way and took refuge in archways and alleys. A fat man ran the risk of having his buttons scraped off if he lingered too long.

Possibly some Englishman was in haste to go to Bu-bu-bu for a mad purpose of his own. Perhaps his automobile had broken down. Only Allah knew what a sahib might take it into his head to do. Several of them had built bungalows at Bu-bu-bu where they often spent the week-ends.

The trip might have been uneventful but for the Goanese chief clerk of the railway office who was drowsily ambling home from his club. He was, in fact, the acting manager and superintendent. Not a wheel turned without his knowledge and permission. He had issued no order for the locomotive to leave the yard after the last trip of the regular daily schedule.

The thing was incredible. He beheld his motive power approaching him with a clickety-click and a rumble while he stood between the rails and waved his straw hat to halt it. He puffed out his cheeks and uttered very angry words.

Fortunately he stepped aside in the nick of time to avoid being bumped into the Goanese hereafter. His knees trembling, he glanced up and caught a glimpse of a tall, ferocious man in white clothes who flourished a careless hand and laughed at him.

The astounded chief clerk of the railway office started wildly in pursuit, his linen coat flapping. His wits were scrambled by his narrow deliverance from death or else he might have comprehended that he was making a foolish spectacle of himself. In his ears rang the sounds of derisive mirth, so loud that he fancied two or three men were jeering him. His English education enabled him to grasp the import of such taunting exhortations as these:

'Step on the gas, Charlie boy. You can make it in two yumps. Pick up those flat feet — sling 'em high and wide. Blah! And also Bu-bu-bu!'

A policeman heard the commotion from afar. He surmised the cause of it. Those terrible American sailors, three of them, who had hidden themselves away, were again violently active. As he sprinted in the direction of the uproar he sounded an alarm which brought a second policeman to join him. They were lathy, thin-shanked men who could cover the ground like greyhounds. They flitted into the street through which the railway track ran, and were amazed at what they saw.

The faster of the two made a leap for the footboard of the locomotive, but a large, hard hand pushed his face and he performed the intensely interesting feat of standing on his head and spinning

like a top. His partner whipped out a pistol and fired in the air. It was not proper to shoot bullets into the Anglo-Saxon race even when, with audacity beyond belief, the Bu-bu-bu Express had been stolen.

It was hopeless to make a stern chase of it. By now this had filtered into the tottering intellect of the Goanese chief clerk. In a lather of perspiration, making noises like a whistling buoy, he came to a stop and tossed his arms in a poignant gesture of farewell. The policemen fired several more shots. He who had been stood on his head was in a temper so peevish that he felt no longer reluctant to pot a sahib. Bullets whistled past the disappearing locomotive. One of them pinged through a pane of glass in front of Martin Donnelly's nose. He ceased to laugh and gave her a little more steam. Couldn't those poor fish take a joke without trying to assassinate somebody?

The iron steed snorted around corners at a speed unheard of within the cramped confines of the city itself. It was all right, said Donnelly, so long as she didn't hop the track and crash into a parlor or a harem. No more rough stuff!

The fugitives were easier in their minds when they saw the open country and the neat garden patches. There were whiffs of copra, rancid, pungent, and the cloying scents of vanilla and cloves. Mr. Stackpole climbed to the cushioned locker on the fireman's side of the platform and gazed about him with an air of absent-minded absorption in his own anxieties.

As a sight-seer his impressions were chaotic. It occurred to him to say:

'I don't want to discourage you, boys, but I think you have overlooked a bet. There are automobiles in the city and a good, hard road to Bu-bu-bu. These heathen may take it into their heads to chase after us. And they can spin out to Bu-bu-bu faster than we can. There is no doubt that we rubbed the police force the wrong way.'

'I did think of tryin' to swipe a car instead of this brass-bound contraption,' replied Donnelly, 'but there didn't seem to be one handy, not even a flivver. Just the loan of it, I mean. We could have paid the owner for the trip, not now, but later.'

This was a delicate effort to sooth the conscience of a warrant officer of the supply department who dwelt in a complicated world of requisitions, vouchers, receipts, duplicate files, and endorsements.

'This making free with private property does bother me,' admitted the chief pay clerk. 'Of course we can send a chit ashore and offer to settle for this special trip at so much per mile.'

'On the level, Mr. Stackpole, you surprise me,' exclaimed Kid Sprague. 'Here we are, completely lost in Zanzibar, and you worried about burning a few lumps of coal that aren't signed for. What about Martin Donnelly's elephant that cost him sixteen dollars? Who pays for that? If he wasn't so good-natured he would pick this little engine up and throw it in the ditch when we finish with it.'

Martin Donnelly, poking the fire, now spoke

words of wisdom. 'You said an earful, Mr. Stackpole, about the police chasing us in automobiles. It's up to us to fool 'em. We had better not run through to Bu-bu-bu. This train is a local from now on, and when we find the right stop we get off.'

Seldom at a loss for information, Mr. Stackpole volunteered: "Years ago I drove out to Bu-bu-bu in a carriage with my friend Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin. It was along this same road. We enjoyed a picnic and a swim near an abandoned palace of the Sultan, about four miles out of Zanzibar. It was close to the beach, with a large park behind it. Quite a lonely, secluded place. I should advise trying to find it. The palace is said to be haunted. For this reason the police may leave it alone.'

'Always there with the stuff, just like a guidebook,' was Donnelly's compliment. 'All I hope is that the British bluejackets won't haunt it like they did that Japanese Coffee Shop. Peace and quiet is what I pine for.'

'And sleep,' suggested William Sprague. 'Not that I have anything to complain about, but you know what I mean. I want to forget certain troubles of my own — overstayin' liberty and everything.'

The locomotive was climbing a long, easy grade. The landscape was an undulating expanse of cocoanut groves, the slender columns lifting their graceful crowns in long aisles of exotic beauty. Donnelly turned to look behind him. The distant headlights of an automobile were faintly discernible through a pearly mist that curled up from the marshes. The

sea-going engine driver was evidently startled. He shut off the steam and applied the brakes. At a word from him, the others jumped from the foot-board and alighted right side up. He delayed to do mysterious things to the machinery. The locomotive moved on, but gathered headway very slowly. Donnelly made a flying leap and scrambled to his knees in the dense grass. He was gazing at his pocket mogul, as he called it, which rolled away from him at a leisurely pace.

'Good Lord, are you letting that engine run wild?' sputtered Mr. Stackpole. 'What do you suppose will happen when it reaches the end of the line at Bu-bu-bu?'

'Please keep calm and collected, sir. I never did see you behave so nervous. She'll stop herself inside of the next mile. She can't make the grade. I pinched the throttle way down and closed the drafts. She won't make any more steam. It will keep that automobile chasin' her a little longer while we retire in good order, me and you and the Kid and one pot-bellied, flea-bit pup named Moses Mahomet Ali.'

They crossed the highway and filed through a cocoanut clearing where the young trees were set out in orderly rows. Haste was advisable in order to find cover. After pounding the paved streets and coral roads the soft earth was grateful to their weary feet. They went briskly, like men who had gained their second wind. Before long they came to a crumbling limestone wall almost concealed in ver-

dure as wide as a bit of jungle. Scrambling through a gap, they found themselves in a wilderness of vines and interlaced trees which Mr. Stackpole declared to be the Sultan's long-neglected park.

The moon revealed traces of terraced gardens and sunken pools, with the decaying framework of a rustic pavilion almost buried in flowering creepers. The wide paths had not been entirely obliterated. They chose to follow one of them which wound in the general direction of the sea. They felt a certain sense of security. It was the calm after the storm. Their night in Zanzibar took on an aspect less menacing and turbulent.

Cassius Stackpole sat down upon a fragment of carved marble and fanned himself with his cap. He had ceased to mourn his lamentable predicament. As a philosopher it was for him to accept what the gods decreed. He was even heard to chuckle. He was beginning to discover that the spark of youth in his soul had not been finally extinguished.

Martin Donnelly expressed a craving for a towel and a cake of soap. Soft coal and vigorous stoking had made him look remarkably like an African chief. He failed to suggest a spick-and-span American bluejacket on shore liberty. William Sprague allowed the puppy to waddle in the grass and bark at a snake that moved with a rustling sound.

A few minutes' rest and they sauntered on, guided by the murmur of the surf among the rocks. Presently they came to the empty shell of a palace overlooking a rugged foreland that jutted boldly from

the sea. The building was an architectural nightmare of whitewashed stone walls, wooden pillars and verandas. It insulted the eye. It was conceived in the atrocious taste of an American summer resort hotel of a generation ago.

The garish gingerbread woodwork was falling apart. The walls were cracked and dark with mold. The windows gaped, with sagging shutters, but the structure still stood to defy rain and sun and the Indian Ocean hurricanes.

'The Sultan kept some harem, believe me,' exclaimed William Sprague. 'There must be quarters for dozens of black-eyed janes in this big old shack of a palace. Oh, boy! What a life!'

'Here, Kid, don't you go getting our principles demoralized,' Donnelly severely admonished him. 'After all the chaperonin' I did to keep you clear of those Japanese dolls in the garden! This is no time to be frivolous. I don't see any beach where we can look for fishing boats. The cliff yonder, in front of the palace, drops plumb to the water's edge.'

'There's sure to be some fishermen close by in the morning,' hopefully suggested William. 'We saw their sails right close to this point when the ship passed in.'

'How's the tide, boy? I'm no deck sailor.'

'Running out strong, Martin. I know when it's due to turn because two of my buddies were overside in a punt this morning slingin' paint down to the water-line. It's a fierce tide, believe me. That punt almost slid out from under 'em. Even if we

found a boat to-night I don't know as we could pull back to the ship without a breeze to help us. It would be a stiff job for a whaleboat full of gobs. We can catch it on the flood after daylight and ride home easy.'

'You show good sense for your age, Kid. Now it's hammocks and pipe down. Let's go find ourselves a suite in the palace. And please tell the number-one eunuch to bring me coffee, toast, and eggs at five o'clock. Unless they're fried on both sides he gets a hundred lashes and his ears cut off. It's the Sultan of Zanzibar speakin'.'

'What do you know about the secrets of the harem, Mr. Stackpole?' demanded the inquisitive Kid.

The chief pay clerk yawned and manifested no interest in the sprightly topic. With the mien of one who knew his way about, he piloted them to the long veranda at the front of the building. They trod the rotten flooring with gingerly care and entered a large apartment whose flavor was oppressively musty. The flash-light disclosed it to be bare of furniture. Tatters of tapestry swayed in the open windows. The frescoes were blotched and foul with dampness. The débris of picnic parties littered the stone floor. In a corner was a pile of dried grass and stalks and two rough mangers where horses or donkeys had been tied.

'Bedding!' devoutly breathed the chief pay clerk. 'Better luck than I hoped for. I shall take off my coat and shoes, wind my watch, and commend my soul to God. Sweet dreams, boys.'

XIII

For some reason, all three men were wakeful. The excitements and fatigues of the evening may have had a tendency to banish drowsiness. At any rate, they were restless tenants of this melancholy room amid the scenes of a departed and profligate splendor. Mr. Stackpole snored for a little while, but rolled over and sat up with a petulant remark. Martin Donnelly kicked himself out of the straw in which he had made a nest and swore that a peck of chaff had sifted inside his shirt and was tickling him frightfully. The Kid fumbled for a cigarette, found an empty package, and begged his comrades to search their pockets.

Mr. Stackpole fished out his silver cigarette case and carelessly let it slip through his fingers. He borrowed the flash-light and recovered the treasure after burrowing in the straw like a gigantic white rabbit. They smoked and wondered why they could not go to sleep. It was natural enough for young William Sprague to inquire:

'What's the dope about this place being haunted, Mr. Stackpole? I don't doubt it myself. This room looks spooky and it smells spooky. I guess that's what the matter is with us.'

'The air is muggy in here,' said the machinist's mate. 'My shirt is wet through. I'd go camp outside on the porch, but sleeping in the moonlight in

the tropics is bad medicine. First thing you know your face is all twisted out of shape with some kind of permanent cramps. I had a shipmate once that was took that way and when he smiled you thought he was sneerin' at you. I dunno how many lads hauled off and pasted the poor old goof.'

The chief pay clerk was politely silent until he could command attention. In that deliberate, convincing manner of his he now proceeded to say:

'In the old days, when Zanzibar was the greatest slave market in the world and the Sultan was the high card, with no foreign spheres of influence or protectorates, or annoyances like that, he did as he jolly well pleased. He had the pick of the ladies and they were fetched to him from Persia and Arabia and Egypt. Money was no object to his feminine supply department. When he became tired of one of these pretty pets, or caught her vamping some gentleman of his court, the Sultan had a most unpleasant trick of ordering the lady to be buried alive.

'There was a curious belief that burial alive prevented the natural processes of decay and dissolution. The body never turned into dust. The breath of life was still in it and could not escape. Therefore an unfortunate lady condemned to this fate remained always young and fair. It was much more agreeable for the Sultan to think of her in that way. You get the point, boys.

'A very barbarous custom,' continued Mr. Stackpole, 'but not much worse than planting live slaves in the mortar when they were laying the foundations

of a new building. This was done, no doubt of it, and the bones have been found in modern times when the city streets were dug up or some construction work undertaken. A friend of mine in Zanzibar gave me a skull and a shin bone when I was here in the old *Brooklyn*. Well, as I say, they tell you the same kind of yarns about the Sultan's favorites. There is a small island as you come into the harbor, on the starboard side, where several of these ladies were buried alive, so tradition insists. On one certain night of the year they come out and dance on the beach — not foggy like ghosts that you can poke your finger through — but warm and lovely and glowing, just the same as when they lived in one of these palaces. But if you get foolish and lose your head and land on the beach to dance with them, you never come back.'

The narrator paused to relight his dead cigarette. The others were silent. Because of the uncanny surroundings the tale had impressed them. The Kid's voice had a perceptible tremor as he exclaimed:

'You don't really fall for that stuff, do you, Mr. Stackpole?'

'You can take it or leave it, son. My Arab friend, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, is a very intelligent man, but he has told me things to make your hair curl, and he believes them to be true. I do know, for a fact, that two British officers rented a house near Bu-bu-bu a couple of years ago. It was an old villa of some dead Sultan where he used to have private parties when he wanted to kick over the traces. These two

Britishers picked out a room for their cots and kits and set their native servants to straightening things out for a vacation of a fortnight or so.

'They stayed there just four nights! Ladies walked in and out and refused to be shooed away from the villa. They were not real ladies, but phantoms, you understand. The officers tried moving the cots into another room and it wasn't so bad then, they said. Apparently they had camped over the niche or grave where one of these unhappy creatures had been buried alive, and she didn't like it. The noise they made disturbed her.

'However, another lady came and stood in the door and gazed at them, and they could hear her sigh. But they couldn't lay their hands on her. It was discourteous of them, but finally they lost their tempers and blazed away at her with pistols. She never turned a hair at the time, but came and stood in the door the next night and they had to listen to her weep and moan. All they could think of was that the bullets had actually hurt her.

'This bothered the officers considerably because they knew the superstition about the breath of life staying in these poor girls, and it seemed cruel to make one of them suffer. So they decided to pass up the haunted villa and go back to their bachelor mess in Zanzibar.'

By now Seaman Sprague was terrifically wide awake. He held Mr. Stackpole's mature years and experience of the world in great esteem. He might have scoffed at the story if told aboard the *Toledo*

by some shipmate of his own tender years. Now he felt his scalp prickle as he said:

'I s'pose there's nothing to it, but you never can tell. Have you any more yarns like that one, Mr. Stackpole?'

'Well, there is the famous Dunga palace, or the ruins of it, in the center of the island. It was built by a mysterious personage known as the "Mwenyi Mkuu" or Great Lord. This Arab was the last of a long dynasty of kings of Zanzibar Island who ruled when the Portuguese navigators first came to these waters and before the Oman Arabs conquered it. This Great Lord had supernatural powers, so the legends affirm. Imprisoned, he made a miraculous escape and fled to the African mainland. No rain fell in the whole island of Zanzibar during his absence of three years. Ruin and famine overtook the people and they had to bring him back.

'When his palace was built, many slaves were buried alive in the foundations. At least, the natives thought so. And when Seyyid Barghash built the Bet-el-Ajaib, or House of Wonders, in Zanzibar, it was difficult to obtain labor because of this common belief that human sacrifices would be required and the workers might be seized for this purpose. The Great Lord of Dunga left behind him his two magic war-drums of mango wood elaborately carved in Arabic characters. When these drums were heard, some disaster impended. The booming sound of them could be heard all over the island. It made men shudder . . .'

William Sprague stood frozen in a listening attitude. Yes, he could hear the measured thump-thump of a distant drum! It was a native dance, a *n'goma*, the nightly diversion of the palm-thatched villages of Zanzibar, but the coincidence was startling. In accents strongly perturbed, William ejaculated:

'Shudder is right, Mr. Stackpole. You've got me all worked up. I say we go out on the piazza and sit. It's not as gloomy as this old sweat-box of a room. It won't make you moon-struck if you just sit in it and don't go to sleep, will it, Donnelly?'

'*You* are liable to get moon-struck anywhere,' was the gruff retort. 'Come on, Mr. Stackpole. Let's wander out and smoke a cigarette. There may be some breeze stirrin'. Ghost stories do help to pass the time. Yours are good. Not that I take any stock in such bunk.'

They adjourned to the long veranda with the round columns and the sagging floor where they could overlook the bold cliff and the placid, shimmering sea. The wind was dying. The water sparkled here and there as the cat's-paws ruffled it, but there were wide patches as smooth as glass. Even out of doors the night air had become heavy and humid. Martin Donnelly slapped a mosquito and muttered:

'I wish I was out at sea, with the *Toledo* easing along at her sixteen-knot cruisin' speed and me with my blanket spread on the deck, top-side, and a bos'n's mate steppin' on my face when he came to

turn out the watch. Put me back where I belong and punishment will roll off me like a duck.'

'I will do my best to soften the captain's heart,' said Mr. Stackpole, in a fatherly voice. 'You and William Sprague have been unavoidably detained. There is no question about that.'

'Huh, the captain has listened to all the excuses that were ever invented,' snorted William. 'That man is a sure-enough cynic.

'It's this dilapidated morgue of a palace that makes us feel down-hearted,' observed the machinist's mate. 'How long ago did the Sultan frolic —'

His voice died in a gulp as though something had choked him. He was staring at the doorway of the room in which they had been. It was perhaps a dozen yards from where they now sat. Donnelly's eyes were round and unwinking. They protruded like marbles. Upon that iron visage which had reflected neither terror nor dismay when confronted by the champion of the Grand Fleet, was written abject panic.

So alarming and mysterious were his symptoms that his companions carefully turned their heads to gaze in the same direction. They, too, became petrified, afraid to move a muscle. It was Martin Donnelly who broke the spell by absently stroking Kid Sprague's head and hoarsely whispering '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*,' '*Wallah*.'

Framed in the doorway was the slender figure of a woman. Although she stood partly in shadow,

they perceived that her face was veiled to the eyes, after the Arab custom. She was clad in white from head to foot. Such was the apparition which had come out of the very room in which these three adventurers had vainly tried to sleep. No wonder they had felt restless! They neither moved nor spoke, but held their breath and waited.

The wraithlike lady glided out from the doorway and was bathed in the brilliant moonlight of the veranda. Her eyes were darkly beautiful as she let them rove, for the moment, to the silent watchers who had not the slightest intention of molesting her. They noted the glint of a gold necklace on her bosom, of a bracelet set with precious stones that clasped her slender wrist. The filmy texture of the fabric that covered her hair and forehead floated like mist in the faint draught of air.

With the light tread of youth she moved across the veranda. Her dainty sandals made no sound. Once, twice, she turned to look at the three strangers in naval uniforms. Her hand stole to her breast as if the sight of them had startled her. Then she seemed to drift like a cloud along a gravel path that led in the direction of the somber, frowning cliffs which soared so abruptly from the surf. Presently she halted, perhaps half way to the brink of the headland.

'Maybe she aims to go and dance on the beach,' Martin Donnelly was heard to murmur, 'but if she wants a dancin' partner, you can count me out. Sultan's favorite — buried alive — the very

first honest-to-goodness ghost I ever set my eyes on!'

'You're tootin' it's a ghost,' came from the fascinated William Sprague. 'And I don't cut in on any fox-trots with *that* phony jane. Now laugh that off!'

XIV

Because Mr. Cassius Stackpole, warrant officer, was forty and slightly bald, the youngsters of the scout cruiser's berth deck were bound to regard him as a venerable relic. Such are the merciless verdicts of nineteen or twenty years. As a faithfully efficient chief pay clerk, it was difficult to regard him seriously as a factor of the ship's fighting strength. This was William Sprague's impression. He respected 'Old Man' Stackpole's fortitude in the peculiar circumstances which had stranded them together, but he had not dreamed that this plodding, eminently respectable person could display a reckless bravery positively superhuman. Martin Donnelly shared this opinion.

It therefore left them gasping when Mr. Cassius Stackpole rose heavily to his feet, jammed the visored cap on the back of his head, and descended the cement steps of the veranda. He was not in flight from the phantom of the Sultan's favorite. Quite the contrary. This was made clear as soon as he stepped into the gravel path. He was advancing toward the edge of the cliff.

Like a lover going to keep a tryst or a hero marching to his doom he trudged, with no sign of hesitation, to overtake the unearthly vision in white. The rational conjecture would have been that Mr. Stackpole had determined to investigate the phe-

nomenon for himself. His comrades, however, were in no mood to be rational. To them it was inexplicable on any other ground than that he had been bewitched — was gone clean off his head.

The impulse was to rush forward and drag him back, but Martin Donnelly had to confess in hushed tones:

'I'm stalled, Kid. I can't turn a wheel to save me. My legs are numb and my feet won't obey orders. How about you?'

'I pass, Martin. Perhaps I'm yellow. That's the last we'll ever see of poor "Old Man" Stackpole. The Department will have to notify his next of kin. It wouldn't do one bit of good for us to interfere.'

Donnelly's rugged common sense shook itself free of the fantastic illusion as he growled:

'Come on, Kid. Snap out of it. We simply can't let him get jerked to hell by this resurrected dame without tryin' to rescue him. It won't do no good to throw rocks at her. Remember what he told us? These midnight baby dolls are bullet proof.'

'My gosh-amighty, Martin, look at him now! He has sailed right up to her with his cap in his hand, and it looks as if they are saying things to each other. String him along is her game, I s'pose, and coax him to dance — and it's good-night! All right, Martin. Let's go to it. I'll stand by if you will. Please go first, will you? You are older and bigger. And don't let her vamp you with any smooth line of fluff. You're a hard guy and you won't fall

for it as easy as the Old Man. This is what the authors call his second blooming.'

They were about to execute this valiant resolve when the black-and-tan pup came running out of the room in which he had curled up for a night's rest. He was lonesome, no doubt, and the fleas distressed him. But it seemed like another coincidence, following the distant thump-thump of the Zanzibar drum, that the pup should sit down with his wrinkled nose uplifted and break out in a shrill, mournful howl. It was not his impudent bark, but a long-drawn, wailing howl. The startled William exclaimed:

'For the love of Mike, will you listen to that? Moses Mahomet Ali is a wise mutt. He is trying to tell us to let it alone, Martin. Dogs know a heap more'n humans when it comes to ghosts and haunted houses and letting you know when there's due to be a death in the family. That was a perfectly good howl, I'll say so, and it is the first time he ever tried to howl in his life. We better think it over. We can't do a darned thing for "Old Man" Stackpole. He is a goner, body, soul, and breeches.'

Donnelly hesitated, but was unconvinced by this hopeless speech. Never should it be said of him that he had refused to attempt to save a shipmate in dire peril. He swore at little Moses Mahomet Ali and gripped Kid Sprague by the arm to drag him along. Avoiding the gravel path, they took a straighter course through the tangled grass, but not hurriedly. They were like rheumatic men who found walking

troublesome. Soon they came to a full stop, unanimously. Were their eyes deceiving them? What they now thought they saw was even more astonishing than the impossible things which had already happened.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole gallantly offered his arm to the seductive phantom lady. These two seemed to stroll on together, still in the gravel path. They were distinctly outlined against the sky. Beyond them was the grim rampart of the cliff where it dropped into the sea. Where they walked the ground was bare. The view was unobstructed. There was neither rock nor tree to hide them for an instant from the gaze of Martin Donnelly and William Sprague.

And then, before they had walked as far as the edge of the cliff, they slowly vanished from sight, melted away, disappeared, the substantial bulk of Chief Pay Clerk Stackpole and the slender, graceful figure of the phantom Arab lady in her draperies of white. They were there — they were gone — in the gorgeous splendor of the tropic moon which almost turned night into day.

XV

It was perfectly all right and understandable for the lady to turn herself into nothing. This was one of her regular tricks. What dumbfounded the two observers was the eerie phenomenon of beholding Mr. Cassius Stackpole dissolve into thin air. It held them pop-eyed for a long, silent moment. They were not suffering from delusions, alcoholic or otherwise, although Martin Donnelly found voice, at last, to mutter that there wasn't much point in a man's staying sober if he was liable to have visions like this wished on him.

He displayed not the slightest eagerness to rush forward and explore the area in which the chief pay clerk had been so tragically obliterated. The noble impulse to stand by a shipmate had slackened headway. Discretion seemed the better part, discussion imperative. Daybreak would be plenty soon enough to look closely into this matter. Of course there was no hope of finding Old Man Stackpole. He had left not even a brass button as a memento.

'H-how did it look to you?' implored the Kid, unable to control a stammer. 'They d-didn't turn and go down to the b-bathing beach to dance. They just went out of sight, like you b-blow out a lantern.'

'Not quite like that, boy,' hoarsely disagreed Martin. 'Not so sudden. What I saw was a sort of fadin' into the ground, as if the lady was headed

back where she come from. Down among the dead men! It reminded me of a mermaid and some poor guy of a sailor dragged down to Davy Jones. While I'm bound not to let myself believe it's true, what in the name o' God *is* the answer? This is some night in Zanzibar, you can take it from me.'

'You're a-tootin' it is,' exclaimed William Sprague in accents a trifle less uncertain. He had begun to pull himself together. 'Well, Mr. Stackpole was old enough to know his own mind, and he certainly brought this on himself. He *would* get frisky with a spook, and now see what happened to him!'

'Yes, Kid, and we'll have an elegant time explainin' this to the ship. His bald head shining grand in the moonlight and — bing — out went his glim! He wasn't there at all. I wonder we don't smell brimstone in the air. Maybe that's old stuff. These modern witches play a different system. It wins, whatever it is.'

'All I smell is cloves and guava bushes,' sighed the Kid. 'Now we can *never* go to sleep.'

'Not inside that haunted room,' the machinist's mate firmly declared, 'even if it is mighty unpleasant to sit out here and look at where Old Man Stackpole ain't. The phony lady may have a sister or something. What we did was to stow ourselves right over the spot where one of 'em was buried alive, and she felt pestered and annoyed, so she started walkin'. We can move around to another porch where the moon won't strike us. It's my advice to stand watch and watch. If another of these fade-away vamps

takes a notion to stroll out and get her a dancing pardner, I am sure going to see her first. And she will have to turn up nothin' less than forty knots to lay alongside this bird.'

'I'll make the Bu-bu-bu Express look like she was hitched to a cocoanut tree,' echoed William, with explosive sincerity. 'I kind of wish we could park ourselves a long way from here for the rest of the night, but it would be just our luck to crash into more trouble. And it don't seem quite right to walk out on the late Mr. Stackpole. You can't tell — perhaps his ghost will come back with a message for us. You get me — the Conan Doyle stuff.'

'Huh, we have Conan Doyle and the rest of them hopheads skinned both ways from the jack,' grunted Donnelly. 'Don't talk to me, Kid. I am full of solemn thoughts. Here to-day and gone to-morrow. Leave the women alone or the goblins will get you.'

They prowled to another side of the haunted building and sat hunched in brooding speculation. After a while the weary youngster dozed off in spite of himself. Donnelly peevishly regretted that Mr. Stackpole had carried the silver cigarette case with him into the world of departed spirits. An eternity of waiting and a cloudless dawn began to flush the horizon. The sea took on its shifting hues of roseate splendor. As another symbol that the sinister influences of the night were dispelled, a bandy-legged pup came rollicking out of the straw. Moses Mahomet Ali was no longer in the mood to express his premonitions in melancholy howls. He tried to

wriggle out of his skin at sight of William Sprague and barked ridiculous defiance of the world at large.

This helped to make the strange enchantments of the moonlight seem impossible. The dilapidated ark of a palace had ceased to be a fearsome relic. And as the seaward horizon became emblazoned with the glorious pageantry of sunrise, the two fugitives were restored to normal, like men who had been drugged by an infernal brew.

Martin Donnelly lurched to his feet, went through a brisk setting-up drill to ease his kinked muscles, and shook the Kid wide awake. They were unkempt and rumpled, haggard with fatigue, but habit compelled them to assume a certain briskness of demeanor. It was time to turn to. Donnelly's voice was matter-of-fact as he said:

'First we scout over to the cliffs and investigate the spot where the chief pay clerk passed out on us. We will have to make some kind of a report on how he lost the number of his mess. The skipper and all hands will plaster us with questions. It looks different this morning. I don't feel the same symptoms.'

'That goes double, Martin,' agreed the boyish seaman. 'Last night I could believe anything. Now you'll have to show me. Mr. Stackpole is too broad in the beam and draws too much water for any skirt to fly away with.'

With no more comment they set out to explore the barren stretch of sand and gravel between the palace and the cliff. It was the nimbler William Sprague who yelled and waved his arms like a luna-

tic. He had discovered an opening in the ground. In fact, he almost fell into it. Donnelly joined him at a gallop.

Upon their knees they peered down into a small round chamber walled with cement. It resembled a shallow well, with a floor no more than half a dozen feet below the surface. Stone steps led down to this floor. In the seaward side of the wall could be discerned an opening like the entrance of a tunnel which appeared to descend at a steep slant. The fascinated sailormen stared at each other until Donnelly said:

'I certainly did get your goat, Kid. I was stringin' you along all the time. Of course I knew Old Man Stackpole had turned some trick like this. You were easy!'

'Pipe down, you big cheese,' scornfully retorted the lad. 'I heard your teeth chatter last night. Come on. Let's go below and find out.'

'The chief pay clerk never gave me back my flashlight after he borrowed it to find his cigarette case,' Donnelly complained. 'Now I know how he found his way down this tunnel. Anyhow, he left me a box of matches.'

No longer terrified by things beyond their comprehension, they scrambled down the steps of the sunken antechamber or vestibule and gazed into the dark passage. It revealed the beginning of a much longer staircase of limestone which pitched down underneath the cliffs. A draught of cool air drew up through it.

'Wait till I go get my pup,' said William Sprague.

'We may not come back this way. Mr. Stackpole didn't.'

'Now he has me bogged deeper than ever, Kid. Why didn't he come back? I feel awful nervous about him.'

'It was a sudden romance, Martin. For an old-timer, he is a fast worker. He chased off with the dame as if he had a date all fixed up with her. It is what they call the dangerous age. Men like that are easy to vamp. And I'll say this girlie had some class to her, even if she did have a veil across her nose.'

'Well, he did put on a picture with a punch, boy.'

Having secured the hungry Moses Mahomet Ali, they began a very cautious journey down through the underground passage. Pausing to strike matches, they encountered no great difficulty in descending toward the sea. They were compelled to stoop to avoid banging their heads against the roof, but the steps were wide and regularly spaced. They could imagine the gallant Mr. Stackpole as venturing into the unknown, leading the veiled lady by the hand and using the flashlight to guide her little feet.

It was heartening when they caught glimpses of daylight below them. The sound of breaking waves came to their ears in murmurous echoes. This startled Seaman Sprague and he went stumbling down two steps at a time. Presently they emerged into a dazzle of light which made them blink.

Almost at their feet was a small pier constructed of solid masonry. It thrust itself out from a shelf of rock which was wide and flat, a natural platform

at the base of the stark cliff. The water that lapped the pier was clear and deep. The bottom was perhaps two fathoms down. Native vessels of considerable size could be moored to such a quay as this.

After glancing at the secluded haven, the Yankee sailors stood gazing at the sea beyond. They had hoped to find a fishing boat which might be persuaded to carry them into the harbor. None of these small craft was visible. What they saw was a large sailing dhow that rode at anchor a few hundred yards off the pier. The brown lateen sail, graceful and lofty, swayed in a breeze that had begun to freshen. It was such dhows as this as had venturesomely made their way across the Indian Ocean from Muscat in the dim, dead days of Solomon. In model and rigging they had defied the changes of modernity. The high poop and square stern with the massive tiller-head of carven timber made this archaic vessel look clumsy, but the long, low bows were as sharp as a clipper's.

Battered and sea-worn, it was to be inferred that this dhow had made a lengthy voyage, with the northeast monsoon to blow her along. Now she was apparently waiting for a favoring slant of wind to waft her into Zanzibar harbor. On her littered deck moved sailors of an aspect wildly picturesque, brown men and black, some of them clad in nothing more than loin cloths. Arabs in bright sashes and turbans loafed on the poop. They made gorgeous splotches of color.

The two refugees gazing from the stone pier were now beginning to piece together certain fragments of the puzzle.

'That big lump of a dhow must have anchored off here last night,' said Donnelly. 'The tide was against her and you remember how calm it got, not enough breeze to mention.'

'Yes, and we couldn't see her from where we sat on the porch, Martin. She was too close under the cliff. Listen, though, that phantom lady might have sighted the dhow if she had been wandering around in the second story of the palace before she floated out and scared us to death.'

'Good dope, Kid. And she was on her way to the pier, down through the tunnel, when we saw her drift off the porch and hit the gravel. And Papa Stackpole, a polite man by nature and having his nerve with him, decided to lend a hand. But where is he, and why didn't he come back to report? It don't seem like him, to leave us flat on our backs.'

'Aboard the dhow, of course,' said the Kid. 'Fast asleep or busy with his breakfast. And I can't blame him. Do you s'pose he got kidnapped and held for ransom?'

'Not if they were wise to the Navy pay table,' Martin grumbled. 'It makes me kind of sore. Not that I mean to butt into the old coot's love affairs. But he might have said good-bye.'

'Well, we can't swim to the dhow and bawl him out. Too many sharks.'

Their criticism of Mr. Stackpole's behavior seemed

reasonable enough. It was not quite the comradely thing for him to have left them all spraddled out and the prey of illusions. Wasted sympathy is apt to curdle. They remained standing on the pier, for lack of anything better to do, conscious of the pangs of hunger and also of a scout cruiser flying the Stars and Stripes whose executive officer cherished emphatic opinions of men who overstayed liberty.

XVI

From the contemplation of their own misfortunes and the suspected perfidy of Mr. Cassius Stackpole they were diverted by the sight of significant activity on board the dhow. A small boat trailing astern was hauled alongside and two black sailors jumped in. Presently they were paddling in the direction of the pier, singing a tuneless chant in time with the stroke. One of them paused to wave his paddle in a beckoning gesture. The other flashed his white teeth in an amicable grin. The stranded Yanks responded by waving their hats. They were about to be rescued, although the details were obscure. Where Mr. Stackpole led, they were prepared to follow excepting when he made his flittings by moonlight.

The boat, which was a rough canoe of ticklish dimensions, drew near to the pier and was deftly fended off in the swell that washed its spray among the rocks. The barbaric seamen from the dhow jabbered various things, but it was a waste of breath to question them. Donnelly stowed his long legs on a grass mat in the bottom. Kid Sprague balanced himself on a thwart, hugging Moses Mahomet Ali who barked indignantly, disliking the notion of this curious little boat.

The paddles splashed in unison for the return journey. Anxiously the passengers surveyed the anchored dhow, expecting to see the dignified chief

pay clerk wave a welcome from the deck. He was mysteriously invisible. They felt perplexed.

Reaching the vessel, they clambered up a ladder of coir rope and gained the deck. Amidships was an airy shelter roofed with cocoanut matting, but no Mr. Stackpole emerged therefrom to greet his shipmates. They were proceeding aft in quest of him when an Arab advanced from the poop to confront them. A dominant figure, he commanded instant attention. Obviously the master of the dhow, and by no means an attractive person! A scar crossed his sun-dried cheek. This or some other slash of a sword had destroyed the sight of one eye. The other eye was that of a man who was accustomed to being obeyed. Lean and brown and scowling, he conveyed an impression of turbulent energy and a hair-trigger temper. He had a bizarre taste in dress, a saffron turban of many intricate folds, crimson sash, wide blue breeches stuffed into wrinkled sea-boots of soft leather.

Lawless sea rover though he looked to be, his demeanor displayed the ceremonial courtesies of his race. To the visitors he bowed gravely, and indicated, by a gesture, that they, his guests, should follow him to the lofty poop deck underneath which the main cabin was situated. He halted to show them the earth-filled fire-box and an antique coffee-pot steaming with an entrancing aroma. Conical silver cups were filled and passed, together with a platter of flat cakes of bread. It was not a hearty breakfast for a brawny machinist's mate and a

growing boy, but they were profoundly grateful for any favors in a world gone wrong. The bitter coffee was a stimulant so potent that Donnelly tingled to the heels and, as he said to himself, was all set to capture the dhow from this One-Eyed Reilly and give him the first bite.

Impatient to learn what had happened to Mr. Cassius Stackpole, they betook themselves into the cabin under the deck. It was a surprisingly spacious room lighted by square windows cut in the stern like an old Spanish galleon. The polished floor was covered with rugs, Turkish and Persian, whose patterns had become softened by age and wear. Like an Arab house, the room contained little furniture. It was kept scrubbed and clean.

On one of these frayed, priceless rugs reclined the lost chief pay clerk of *U.S.S. Toledo*. His back was propped against a wooden chest elaborately studded with brass nails. An embroidered pillow was tucked under his head. He was slumbering sweetly. The petulant William Sprague exclaimed:

'Will you look at him! Pounding his ear as if he was in his own bunk in the warrant officer's country! And he went and quit us cold and drove us crazy. If it wasn't for his rank and him weighted down with years and everything, I'd wake him up mighty swift and sudden.'

'Don't be so stupid,' chided Martin Donnelly, who was bending over the sleeper. 'He is a casualty. I wonder who put that bandage on him. It's as shipshape a job as a pharmacist's mate could do.'

One leg of Mr. Stackpole's white trousers had been turned up. The foot and ankle were wrapped with strips of gauze and neatly secured with adhesive tape. The air in the cabin was somewhat laden with the perfumes of dried fish and bilge water, but these could not subdue the smell of iodine.

'That wild Arab skipper can't be as nifty at first-aid as all this,' said Donnelly, scratching his head.

'Blow in Mr. Stackpole's ear and wake him up,' advised the Kid. 'Ask him what he did with the lady spook. Let's us tackle one thing at a time.'

They were saved the trouble of blowing in Mr. Stackpole's ear. He raised his chin and opened his eyes. A frown of pain wrinkled his ample brow. He removed the pillow from behind his head and bent over to place it very carefully beneath his bandaged foot. Then he brightened at recognizing his comrades twain. They were about to hail him in loud, inquisitive language, but he placed a finger on his lips before he earnestly warned them:

'Ss-s-s-h, boys! Please be as quiet as you can. For Heaven's sake, don't rouse *her* out yet.'

He nodded toward a partition at the forward end of the cabin. It had been knocked together of boards, with battens to cover the cracks. Apparently it walled off a stateroom of a temporary character. Mr. Stackpole seemed to be strangely perturbed, almost afraid of something. This furtive uneasiness was unlike his customary aplomb. This puzzled the machinist's mate who demanded:

'Why so gun-shy? You never turned a hair last

night when the lady came surging right out of her grave to give us the once-over. It's polite and nice to soft pedal if she is all tired out and needs the sleep, but that oughtn't to make you act so jumpy.'

'Oh, it is not the young person, Miss Zuleida, at all. The other one is what ails me,' was the chief pay clerk's astonishing reply. He glanced at the stateroom partition after the manner of a hunted man before he went on to say, 'She took beautiful care of me, understand — bandaged my sprained ankle, washed my face — gave me a slug of brandy from her flask — and tucked me in for the night. But she is a woman of — er — of a forceful personality — and I was in no condition to assert myself. She took it for granted that she could ride right over me. Why, she even has Selim Majid under her thumb. He is the captain of the dhow. I suppose you met him.'

'One-Eyed Reilly, do you mean?' said Donnelly. 'She tamed that sea-going burglar? For the love of Mike, Mr. Stackpole, who is this other woman you have gone and afflicted us with? Can't you leave 'em be? Are you collectin' a harem?'

'Don't raise your voice, please,' plaintively besought the invalid, again casting a troubled eye at the stateroom. 'She is an Englishwoman, Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison. This dhow is under charter to her. She is, well — a humdinger. She has rambled all over the world by herself — crossed the Arabian Desert with a camel caravan — went up to Nairobi to shoot lions and elephants and things —

thinks nothing at all of cruising the Indian Ocean in this outlandish packet to get away from tourists and find smears of local color for a book she wants to write. In my long and varied experience I have never met a woman like her. Whew!'

Mr. Stackpole mopped his face with a dingy wad of a handkerchief. Martin Donnelly had listened to the recital with an air of sympathetic interest, but displayed no symptoms of panic. Taken by and large, it had been a rough night for the old man, he reflected, and his nerves had been run ragged. All this fuss about a real, live woman that scared him didn't sound sensible.

'We can break this Miss Fyffe-Harrison out of storage directly, Mr. Stackpole, and look her over. How come you to get yourself on the hospital report?'

'Fell down the steps in that confounded tunnel. Turned my ankle badly but managed to limp to the pier. I signaled the dhow with your flash-light. This — er — this extremely competent Englishwoman happened to be on deck — too hot to sleep below — and she sent a boat ashore. I took the unfortunate girl off with me, of course. That was my duty. She was in the devil of a lot of trouble, boys. I did the proper thing. When I stepped up to her, there in the moonlight, she was trying to escape like ourselves. She had run away from the household of a wealthy Arab of Zanzibar. She was his latest favorite and it had cost him a whacking price to get her away from her own people. As a bride she played in hard luck.

This brute of a husband had a trick of beating her with a rhino-hide cane and threatening to cut her throat. I regret to say that his name is Azzan-bin-Hassin, my old friend who was playing chess with me in the Japanese garden.'

'I sized *him* up as wicked,' observed Donnelly. 'The heathen bum! I wish I had fanned him with my ebony elephant. It's a wonder he didn't pull some fancy stunt on the poor girl, like buryin' her alive. And she decided to walk out on him?'

'Yes, she took a chance of finding some way to get back to her home town, Dar-es Salaam, on the mainland of British East Africa. It is not more than sixty or seventy miles by sea from Zanzibar. She sneaked out last night, while her lord and master was away, and hid in the old palace where we were, hoping to strike a bargain with some native vessel or other. She happened to see this dhow get becalmed and drop anchor. So she started down to the pier, through the passage that had been dug by some dead Sultan to land his slaves and plunder. She had heard of the tunnel and knew where to find the entrance because Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin had taken her to the bathing beach not far from the cliffs for picnics and such.'

'So you rescued the beautiful heroine and got knocked out yourself,' exclaimed William Sprague. 'You were there with bells on. Of course you couldn't come back and put us wise.'

'No, son, I couldn't climb all those steps,' replied Mr. Stackpole. 'And the nigger sailors refused to

carry a message for me because the palace was haunted, so they said. So I came aboard the dhow for the night. Miss Fyffe-Harrison ordered the captain to send a boat in and look for you the first thing this morning. Under the circumstances it was the best I could do.'

'You did darned well for an old gent with a flat wheel,' was the Kid's fervent tribute. 'We thank you, Mr. Stackpole. Where is the young lady stowed, in with this Miss Beatrice Fyffe-And-Drum?'

'Yes, William. As a chaperon this Englishwoman is emphatically a corker. I advise you to avoid all frivolity.'

'But look here, sir,' chimed in Donnelly, his voice growing deeper and louder, 'this lovely young ghost dancer of yours wants to sail from here to Dar-es Salaam. And what about us three Navy guys that have got to get back to their ship and can't wait for no more romances and heart-throb stories? Will this British female tramp act sensible and take us into the harbor right now? I never start nothing with a woman, but if there is to be any argument on this proposition, she had better clamp down.'

Mr. Stackpole moved his sprained ankle and said 'ouch.' He had changed his position in order to keep a more vigilant watch on the stateroom partition at the forward end of the cabin. Now his fingers picked at a button of his shirt and he chewed his lip. The door of the small apartment had suddenly opened. Miss Fyffe-Harrison stepped out briskly. First im-

pressions were pleasing to the sight. A woman still handsome, of somewhere near forty years at a guess, she was trimly built and straight. Her brown hair was bobbed. She wore a white shirt with a rolling collar open at the throat, khaki riding breeches, and cloth puttees. The tints of wind and sun were not unbecoming to her well-cut but somewhat austere features. In a clear, untroubled voice she exclaimed:

'Which of you called me a British female tramp? And who proposed to clamp me down? My word, but you Americans do use such extraordinary language!'

XVII

For the trio of unfortunate pilgrims from *U.S.S. Toledo* it was an extremely embarrassing moment. Even the machinist's mate, rough-hewn and blunt of speech, had a fine sense of deference where a woman was concerned. William Sprague had been taught at home to mind his manners, nor did he forget them now. Off flew his round white hat while he blushed to the ears and waited for his elders to open a somewhat difficult conversation. This duty seemed to devolve upon Mr. Cassius Stackpole as the diplomatic dean of the group. He wore an anxious expression. His easy flow of words seemed to be dammed up. It was one of those awkward pauses. However, it was for him to break the ice which was fast forming in this torrid cabin. With a cough he ventured to say:

'Why, good-morning, Miss Fyffe-Harrison! How — er — how fit you look. I am afraid we may have disturbed you. And how is the other young lady?'

The imperious Englishwoman was not to be appeased by silly flattery. Ignoring the disabled Mr. Stackpole, she impaled poor Donnelly with a scrutiny that made him wince. He was unmistakably the villain because he looked the part. Crossing the cabin to confront him, she exclaimed:

'You will apologize, my man, or I shall order Captain Selim Majid to throw you off the dhow.

You are a depraved character, as one can readily see, but I am used to dealing with all kinds of rascals.'

'Yes, ma'am, I beg your pardon,' faltered the stricken scoundrel whom the attack had bowled over. 'I surrender. What a whale of a woman you are! To tramp — excuse me — to travel all alone as the commodore of this crew of Arab yeggs is a performance that has Hollywood stopped.'

She permitted herself a twinkle of amusement. In a manner offensively patronizing she addressed herself to Mr. Stackpole.

'You are a warrant officer, so you said. I am familiar with the distinctions in the Royal Navy.'

This slur was too much for the mellowed philosophy of the chief pay clerk to endure. With an indignation that startled Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison he declaimed:

'This is no time to air your notions of social caste, madam. Save that nonsense for the Ritz. You were very kind to me last night and I feel the obligation. But for Heaven's sake, let's get down to the essentials.'

The woman was dumbfounded. That her wealth and social connections had permitted her to disregard conventions and to give rein to her eccentricities was unknown to these Yankee sailormen. Nor was she able to realize that this prestige had helped to guard her from mishaps and annoyances among desert tribes and Arab buccaneers, among the naked Africans of upland and jungle. British administra-

tors and agents had spread the word and the far-flung influences of the Empire were kept in touch with the audacious wanderings of Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison.

That Mr. Cassius Stackpole should dare to be impertinent, should presume to challenge anything she might take it into her head to say, was enough to provoke a temperament already ruffled. The man had displayed a certain chivalry toward the luckless girl who had fled from the harem of wicked Azzan-bin-Hassin, and for this reason his plea that his two comrades be brought off to the dhow had been granted. They had been in some kind of trouble ashore, the details of which were not at all clear. It had been a duty to bandage the warrant officer's ankle and to try to make him comfortable for the night.

Now, however, these visitors were in the way. To herself Miss Fyffe-Harrison put it more strongly than this. They were a bother and a nuisance and she had precious little sympathy to waste on their plight. Bluejackets who ran wild ashore deserved to be severely dealt with by their own officers. It was merely one phase of keeping the lower classes in their places.

It might have been said, on the other hand, that they had been singularly unfortunate in introducing themselves to her notice. The jinx, perhaps. She was a woman of strong prejudices in which she had the utmost confidence. To the smoldering Mr. Stackpole she retorted:

'Don't talk rubbish. Just what I am to do with you and these two common sailors —'

'Uncommon, ma'am, to hear us tell it,' broke in the suppressed Martin Donnelly, with that black scowl of his. 'I am a chief petty officer of the engineer's department. Not a gentleman, though, and thank God for that. This Sprague boy is a seaman on his first cruise, snatched right out of the cradle. It does seem as if you ought to be kind of gentle with him, seein' as you are old enough to be his mother.'

This was ungallant and he should have felt ashamed of himself, but his feelings had been hurt and his resentment was bitter. The woman colored and was at a loss for a crushing rebuke. The graceless Kid snickered. Miss Fyffe-Harrison had not appealed to him as a motherly sort of person. She seemed better qualified to be the executive officer of a scout cruiser. There was a spark of affection in her heart, however, but the object was the pup, Moses Mahomet Ali, which happened to be tugging at Mr. Stackpole's bandage.

'What an ugly, intriguing little creature!' cried the mistress of the dhow. 'Has he had anything to eat this morning?'

'No, ma'am,' respectfully answered William Sprague. 'He will take his breakfast with us when it's time for mess-call.'

This was a tactful reminder that strong men could not long sustain life on Arab bread and coffee. It was overlooked by Miss Fyffe-Harrison who had a single-track mind and was not in an hospitable

humor. Ceasing to waste endearments on the pup she seated herself upon the edge of a low divan. Martin Donnelly, tired of standing, assumed a cross-legged posture on a rug. The Kid followed his example. It looked like a council of sheiks among whom impatience was bad form. The woman lighted a cigarette. Blowing smoke through her nose, she began to speak as follows:

'I am enormously interested in the fate of Zuleida, the girl you brought aboard my dhow, Mr. Stackpole. A brainless doll, of course, but very beautiful and she clings to me as her one hope. I have promised to return her to her people in Dar-es Salaam. It is a duty thrust upon me. If she falls into the clutches of that beast from whom she escaped he will probably kill her. And nobody would be the wiser. Personally I should enjoy horse-whipping him.'

'Please excuse me,' interrupted Kid Sprague who had pulled out his watch. Every remorseless tick had a tragic message for him. The longer he overstayed liberty, the heavier the punishment. 'You aren't planning to make sail for Dar-es Salaam right away, are you? This young gob has another date and a mighty important one.'

Ignoring him as though he had ceased to exist, she resumed the argument.

'With the northeast monsoon blowing, Captain Selim Majid can make the run to Dar-es Salaam in a day. Then if he finds he can't beat back to Zanzibar with the wind against him, it really makes no

great difference to me. I can visit Zanzibar some other time, by mail steamer. As the capital of what used to be German East Africa, Dar-es Salaam sounds rather jolly. And the shooting up country is said to be very good.'

This was so calmly oblivious of the destinies of the unhappy Yanks that they felt bewildered. Dealing with a woman who always had her own way was going to be difficult. Navy regulations failed to cover it. Struggling to subdue their emotions, striving to keep hold of courtesy, they listened to the forceful accents of Miss Fyffe-Harrison.

'I have a dilemma on my hands and I dislike them frightfully. If I take my dhow into Zanzibar harbor in order to rid myself of you men, the word may get ashore that I have this girl, Zuleida, concealed in the cabin. In an affair of this sort I can't trust Captain Selim Majid. He will be very much afraid of the power and vengeance of Azzan-bin-Hassin, the husband of poor Zuleida, who is a cousin of the Sultan, so you inform me, Mr. Stackpole. And Captain Selim Majid will be greedily expecting a handsome reward for the delivery of Zuleida to Azzan-bin-Hassin's harem.'

The adventurous Englishwoman was carried away by the sound of her own arguments. The naval audience still endeavored to remember that she was a woman and to be treated as such, but forbearance was frazzled. The crisp, cultured voice went on to inform them:

'You can see what a risk it would be to sail in

close to Zanzibar town. You may ask why I don't place Zuleida under the protection of the British Resident, Sir Howard Brismayne, to whom I have letters. I am quite sure he would decline to interfere in the private concerns of a prominent Arab like this Azzan-bin-Hassin. It might mean complications with the Sultan. The British policy is careful to avoid meddling with native life and customs as far as possible.'

Mr. Cassius Stackpole had been fighting down the desire to smother this woman with her own pillow. Here he was, almost helpless with a sprained ankle as the result of a deed of knightly unselfishness, and a bobbed-haired tyrant in riding-breeches talked as if she meant to carry him off to Dar-es Salaam. He was by no means a submissive lump of a man. For years he had wielded authority within his own confined realm, and the service had stamped him. With a stubborn set of the jaw, he exclaimed:

'And you would dump us on the beach of the African coast, Miss Fyffe-Harrison? Is that what you are driving at?'

'Either at Dar-es Salaam or at the pier yonder, Mr. Stackpole.'

'You appear to forget our situation,' strongly asserted the chief pay clerk. 'Far be it from me to risk harming a hair of the head of the beautiful Zuleida, but why not talk it over with us in a reasonable way instead of making a monologue of it? We must figure out some plan of getting back to our ship this morning. To be set ashore anywhere on Zanzibar

Island means that we will be thrown in jail and detained the Lord knows how long. Our cruiser sails for Mozambique to-morrow as the next port of call. And we have no intention of being left behind or dragged aboard in disgrace at the last moment. If we lose the ship here we can never catch up with her on this whole cruise.'

'And you are willing to make no sacrifice at all to save the life of Zuleida?' cried the Englishwoman. 'My word, but men are always thinking of themselves!'

'Life is full of dilemmas,' replied the chief pay clerk. 'In the service we call them emergencies. Why not send your small boat in to the *Toledo?* We can crowd ourselves into it at a pinch. The ship lies no more than four or five miles from here. And you can wait out here with the dhow.'

Miss Fyffe-Harrison's fine features were clouded with thought. She ran a slim hand through her wavy mop of hair before saying:

'But my sailors might carry a message ashore to that infernal rotter, Azzan-bin-Hassin. One or two of them overheard the story last night when I was talking to the girl. Azzan-bin-Hassin might organize a party and board the dhow before we get enough breeze to work out to sea.'

Martin Donnelly upheaved his gaunt frame from the rug. He shook himself and glowered darkly at Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison. Mistaking his intentions, she clapped a hand to her hip pocket. Clenching a small, flat pistol, she waved it at him.

'Shucks, lady, don't go dustin' me with those little bullets,' was his weary remark. 'You are all alike — fretty and high-strung. Shoot at Mr. Stackpole. He's a target you can't miss and anchored besides. Come along on deck with me, Kid. Maybe we can hail a fisherman's boat and strike a bargain, which is what we intended to do in the first place. I never did get so tangled up in a line of conversation.'

They left Mr. Stackpole to fight it out alone with the arbitrary personage of high degree. The dhow was waiting for sailing orders. It still swung to a hempen cable although the flooding tide rippled past the sharp bow. It could have been drifting into the harbor with the breeze which, freshening at sunrise, had now turned light and fickle. A haze had spread over the sea. The sky was no longer a dazzling blue bowl. It was becoming overcast, watery, with cloud banks climbing from a vague horizon.

The change of weather had been sudden. To Donnelly's disappointment, not a fishing boat was visible alongshore or even among the islands that sheltered the harbor entrance. Ordinarily at this hour the water was flecked with their sails.

'They don't like the looks of this weather, Kid,' said the machinist's mate. 'They smelled it before it began to thicken. Now what? We got off on the wrong foot with this strong-handed woman. Calling her a British female tramp just naturally threw her into reverse. It is just as Old Man Stackpole says — if we land where she picked us off from, we

get tossed into the cooler after all the trouble we took to keep out of it. And we would have to hoist the chief pay clerk all the way up that tunnel and then find transportation or lug him between us. It looks like grief to me.'

'Let the nigger sailors put us ashore. Then we stand 'em on their kinky heads and take the canoe,' was William's impulsive advice. 'Once we get clear of the dhow, we can paddle that crazy little boat as far as the *Toledo*.'

'There it is again,' was the mournful comment. 'You just can't treat a woman the way you would a man. It's a bright idea, Kid, but it would be stealing her only boat. And it don't seem right to leave her and the dhow out here without any boat at all. It seems different to me from the Bu-bu-bu Express. We borrowed that, when it was off duty, and we returned it promptly.'

'How many sailors aboard this dhow?' hopefully suggested William. 'Not more than a dozen or so, Martin? You don't feel delicate about mixin' it up with One-Eyed Reilly, do you? Can't we start an old-fashioned mutiny?'

'You flatter me, Kid. This is positively the most ridiculous kettle of fish I was ever dropped into. That woman turned spiteful and enjoys tormenting us. You can't tell me she wants our company on the trip to Dar-es Salaam. I can speak for one bimbo she didn't fall in love with.'

'She yearns to adopt me,' gravely observed the Kid. 'I could see it in her eye. Let's us go forward

and look this junk over while Mr. Stackpole softens the woman's heart. He can handle her if anybody can. You simply make her worse, Martin.'

They climbed down from the poop deck, after scowling at Captain Selim Majid who made no mention of breakfast. Amidships was the deck-house or shelter made of stout poles and matting which had caught their attention when they had footed it over the side of the dhow. Now the Kid was moved to investigate, on the chance that this might be the galley containing a friendly cook and a meal of rice and fish. Carelessly he raised one of the brown mats which hung like a curtain. He was surprised to discover that it covered a row of iron bars set into stout timbers at top and bottom. Behind the bars was a shadowy compartment whose end walls were solidly built. It was like a huge box, with the structure of poles and matting to protect it against blazing sun and boisterous weather.

Something moved inside the cage. Seaman Sprague leaped back and collided with Donnelly. With gingerly tread they stepped forward together and lifted another mat. Now they could see the tawny shape of a half-grown lion. Martin swore it was as big as a cow. This was an exaggeration. This episode followed too closely on the heels of his interview with Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison. Martin was not quite himself.

The unexpected lion was comfortably sprawled against one end of the cage. He regarded the spectators with drowsy, yellow eyes in which was no

hostile threat. He merely asked the favor that they be good enough to let him alone. Lazily he switched a tufted tail against the smooth planks of his prison. His mouth opened in a prodigious yawn. The fangs were in excellent condition for business, as Donnelly noted. He was ready to give this lion a high rating for efficiency.

Although an amiable lion, as appraised in this hasty survey, it was much too large to be cuddled as a household pet. The iron bars of the cage were badly rusted. This occurred to William Sprague as another urgent reason for saying good-bye to the dhow. He was so diverted that he forgot all about little Moses Mahomet Ali who had been allowed to have the run of the deck. Now the pup dashed madly forward and exploded in a volley of barks to show that no lion could make him turn tail. The Kid yelled and lunged to save the warrior mutt from the peril of instant annihilation. Moses Mahomet Ali was deaf to all warnings. He was otherwise engaged, for he had spied the tufted tail, the end of which was switching outside the bars. It was a challenge.

The Kid made another effort to avert calamity just as the pup flew at this taunting tail and nipped it with his sharp teeth. The astonished lion emitted a throaty growl and hastily removed its tail to a safer place. The pup accepted this as a gesture of cowardice, of reluctance to respond to the call to battle stations. In his homely, grotesque carcass there was no such attribute as fear. Pooh, what was

a lion more or less? Eluding the Kid's frantic swoop, he bolted into the cage, easily slipping between two bars.

William Sprague retreated a pace and closed his eyes. He could not bear to witness the lamentable finish. Likewise he clapped his hands to his ears. One anguished yelp and the dog's master would have to say it with flowers. After intolerable suspense, William opened his eyes. The mystified lion had lounged to its feet and was striking out with a padded paw in a hesitant, half-hearted manner, as though to cuff the impertinent atom of an intruder. The cavernous jaws showed a rough, pink tongue. In short, the king of beasts had encountered a phenomenon so novel that it flabbergasted him.

This state of mind encouraged the pup to renew his insolence by using profane language and dashing to and fro in the cage. At a chance blow from the lion's furry paw whose claws were sheathed, Moses Mahomet Ali was batted like a ball. He bounced to his feet and was undismayed. Kid Sprague watched his opportunity and thrust a swift arm through the bars. Out he whisked the pup by a hind leg, its protesting outcries indicating that it could have made that damned lion throw up the sponge in one more round.

'Gee, I'm glad the mutt didn't get rough with that valuable lion and damage him,' grinned Martin Donnelly. 'You don't want to have to settle a bill like that, boy. Your pay will be nicked bad enough as it is, for losin' yourself on liberty.'

'Some hound, Martin. I'll bet he would sass a rhinoceros. Do you s'pose this lion belongs to Miss Fyffe-Harrison? There is one dame that would pick out just this kind of a pet to play with. Listen, old-timer, we *gotta* get busy and start something before this floating bug-house lifts anchor and steers for Dar-es Salaam. I say we go back to the cabin and find out what Mr. Stackpole has to report. If it wasn't for leaving him in the discard, you and I could take a gamble on the sharks and swim for the beach as a last, desperate measure of brave men at grips with fate.'

Donnelly was indifferent to this empty chatter. Morosely he gazed at sea and sky. Wetting a finger, he held it up. The uncertain breeze had shifted and was drawing out of the south. This was exceptional for the time of year. Machinist's mate though he was, much service afloat had given him something of the sailor's knowledge of wind and weather. In his bones he now felt that they were in for a local disturbance of considerable violence, rain squalls, or a tropic gale. Evidently the Zanzibar fishermen had been of the same opinion.

Presently the seamen of the dhow received orders from their ferocious captain. Obedience was instant, even fearful, whenever he spoke to them. It was to conjecture that he ruled this mixed and primitive company with a rod of iron and there was no law to restrain him. His manner of man was as ancient as the pattern of the vessel itself. Therefore his crew toiled zealously while he told them what to do. The

one boat was hoisted to the deck and lashed bottom up. No more pother about getting rid of the refugees from the American man-of-war. They could sink or swim for it with the rest of them. The salvation of the dhow and her people was at stake. The anchor came home to the creaking of a clumsy wooden winch. The great brown sail was reefed down amid a clamor of shouts. The first strong gust of wind came whistling up from the southward. A flurry of rain spattered from the lowering clouds. The harbor was somberly obscured.

XVIII

THE dhow gathered headway, but not to steer for the open sea and lay a course for Dar-es Salaam. The imperative business was to thrash into Zanzibar harbor and so gain a sheltered anchorage. It would be touch and go to fight clear of the sandy islands to leeward that threatened to trap the vessel. A veteran mariner of the India Ocean was Captain Selim Majid who feared neither man nor evil spirits. Seldom had he been guilty of such a blunder as waiting too long when foul weather portended.

In this instance he had been expecting every moment to hear Miss Fyffe-Harrison order him to clear the dhow of the three unwelcome strangers for whom he felt no affection whatever. By the beard of the Prophet, one Christian was enough, and a woman at that!

A burden of anxiety lifted from the soul of Martin Donnelly as soon as he understood what the Arab skipper was trying to do. In order to find a comfortable refuge in the harbor, the dhow would have to run in close to the city itself and anchor within a few hundred yards of the *Toledo*. The decision had been wrenched from the keeping of the obstinate Englishwoman. Father Neptune had decided to take a hand in the game.

'Well, Kid,' cheerily spoke Martin, 'unless something cracks or a shoal knocks the bottom out of this

comical old tub, another hour ought to see us safe aboard our happy home.'

'Gosh, how I dread it, big one! No fatted calf for us. But I ought not to grouch. Do you think this one-eyed shellback can haul clear of that nearest island? Not so good, is it?'

'She is pinched tight, son, and I don't like the way she sags off between the flurries of wind. But this Selim sundowner won't let her pile up. If he can't fetch clear of the breakers he will have to square away for the open sea.'

So absorbed were these two in watching the struggle of the dhow that they had failed to notice the approach of a handsome motor launch rapidly coming from the inner harbor. The spray flew over its cabin, but the wind-whipped sea had not yet begun to swell and break. The launch was heading to intercept the hard-driven dhow. This was easy to read.

Captain Selim Majid was seen to hold a battered telescope to his eye. A flag whipped from a staff at the stern of the launch. It was red, like a bit of flame, but not to be mistaken for the ensign of old England. Soon Martin Donnelly could make out an unfamiliar device, something like a new moon and stars picked out in white. It reminded him of the flag that floated over the palace of His Highness, Seyyid Khalifa, the present Sultan of Zanzibar.

'Roll 'em again, Kid,' was the sighing comment. 'This looks like deuces up. I should say that Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, the well-known chess-player and

wife-beater, had borrowed the loan of his royal cousin's launch to make us a boarding call.'

'Honest, Martin? Is it as bad as that? How in time did he dope it out that the Zuleida fairy had stowed herself in this dhow? Now we *are* all snarled up for fair.'

'He trailed her by her hair-pins or something like that,' grumpily answered Donnelly. 'He hustled his men out as soon as she was reported A.W.O.L. And they happened to see the dhow from the top of the cliff. It looked to 'em like a good bet. It is up to Captain Selim Majid. If he eases off and legs it out to sea he can give the launch the merry laugh. This dhow will run like a scared rabbit, give her half a chance.'

Just then a little brass cannon barked from the bow of the launch as a peremptory summons to heave to. Selim Majid yelled at the four seamen who strained at the tackles of the massive tiller. Instead of veering to make a stern chase of it, the dhow swung slowly into the wind and hung there with a thunderous slatting of canvas. The wild sea rover from Muscat had recognized the Sultan's flag, emblem of a sovereignty that was still real and potent in the eyes of the people of his own blood and religion. To them he was no shadowy figment of greatness, but the ruler of a dynasty which, within recent memory, had extended its influence over vast regions of the African coast.

To defy the Sultan of Zanzibar as personified in the flag that flew from this launch, was a bit too

much for Captain Selim Majid. It might entail unpleasant consequences.

'Well, I don't know,' thoughtfully observed the machinist's mate. 'I suppose we will have to stand and look on while this scandalous Azzan-bin-Hassin cops the lovely Zuleida and carries her back to the harem. But I don't like the idea of letting him get away with it. Turns a white man's stomach, eh, Kid?'

'It sure does, Martin. Women seem to complicate us worse and worse. You are an able citizen, but I don't see how you can bust your way out of this.'

'Not a Chinaman's chance,' admitted Donnelly, humiliated. 'Little brass cannon are trumps. Captain Selim Majid has chucked it.'

Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison had emerged from the cabin and was engaged in strenuous argument with the master of the vessel. She disapproved of his surrender and was urging him to take a sporting chance and try to get away. The two Yanks, looking on from amidships, admired her for it.

Now it was possible to identify Azzan-bin-Hassin himself, a stately figure standing beside the helmsman of the launch. Half a dozen sailors in a sort of naval uniform were huddled in the cockpit. Three of these had rifles in their hands.

Sullenly Martin Donnelly watched the launch turn and come up under the stern of the dhow. Captain Selim Majid and his crew were impassive spectators. It was the will of Allah. Mr. Azzan-bin-

Hassin shouted to the deck. It was a command and a threat. There was silent acquiescence. The indomitable Miss Fyffe-Harrison had entirely subsided. For once she was conquered by circumstances. Her bitterly distasteful errand it was to go below and break the news to Zuleida still secreted in the stateroom and trustingly confident of gaining a haven in Dar-es Salaam.

Martin Donnelly slouched aft to the high poop deck where he could view the proceedings at closer range. He was seething with rebellion, but could fabricate no definite purpose. Stopping rifle bullets appeared to be foolish. Nothing could be gained by it. He moved to the rail and peered down at the launch which had made fast to a length of line tossed from above. Boat-hooks were keeping it clear of the vessel's side.

Azzan-bin-Hassin looked up and beheld the iron visage and heavy shoulders of the hero from the American cruiser who had defied the assembled Spitfires in the Japanese garden, who had joined battle with the champion of the Grand Fleet and, according to later reports, had disrupted the police force of Zanzibar single-handed. The courtly Azzan-bin-Hassin was greatly startled and showed it. Evidently he was not expecting to renew the acquaintance of Martin Donnelly just at this time. This American bluejacket was, by nature, a formidable obstacle. And his glowering countenance expressed the most intense contempt and hostility.

The result was a moment of indecision and delay

on the part of Azzan-bin-Hassin. His sailors noticed it. They were uneasy, forgetting to handle the launch with vigilance.

Merely to gaze down at the unpleasant, sneering features of Azzan-bin-Hassin was enough to infuriate Martin Donnelly, to let impulse take its sway. It was like touching a match to a fuse. He let his glance rove on the deck of the dhow. It fell upon a brass-bound water-cask secured in chocks, just abaft the cabin companionway, no more than three strides from where he stood at the rail. Whipping out a pocket-knife, he cut the lashings. His fingers gripped the ends of the cask.

It was heavy, very heavy, as he had hoped. The stout cask filled with water was a weight that made his sinews crack as he swung it up with a heave and a grunt. To the amazed Captain Selim Majid it was a miracle to see one man lift that cask, steadily, without pausing, and run, not walk, with it to the side of the dhow.

Donnelly poised the cask upon the teak rail. The upperworks in the stern part of the dhow lifted perhaps twelve feet above the water. A long drop, with the reliable law of falling bodies to assist the herculean enterprise.

The Sultan's launch had been built for speed and display. It was a pleasure craft ornately fitted. The planks were thin, the frames light.

Azzan-bin-Hassin uttered a loud, terrified cry before ducking into the cabin. His men were scrambling forward over the cabin roof, anywhere to escape the impending descent of that brass-bound cask.

Smiling happily, Donnelly released his grip. The cask hurtled downward like a huge bomb and smote the bottom-boards of the launch's cockpit with a crash truly magnificent.

'And there's that,' muttered the gratified machinist's mate as he surveyed the results. 'Now swim for it, you lousy sculpins!'

The sea was gushing into the launch through the splintered planks. The cask had all but driven clear through them. Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin, frantically popping out of the cabin, made an effort to scale the side of the dhow by clinging to the line that held the launch. Donnelly's knife severed the line. It was a gesture of farewell to an unbidden guest. Drifting away, the launch filled rapidly. Miss Fyffe-Harrison, moved less by pity than by expediency, exclaimed to Donnelly:

'Good Lord, man, this will drown the lot of them. Haven't you gone a bit too far?'

'No, ma'am. That launch ought to float waterlogged. The cabin and all the fancy woodwork will keep her from foundering. The tide'll drift her into the harbor after a while and those Arab cooties can hang on till somebody picks 'em up.'

'Jolly well done, Donnelly. Splendid!' said she, in a relenting mood. 'Zuleida will weep on your neck.'

'Not if I see her first she won't. But where does this little interruption leave us at? In the hole again, it looks to me.'

'We can't very well put into Zanzibar now, can

we?' she replied. 'It would mean no end of difficulties with the officials, British and native. This Azzan-bin-Hassin must be a person of consequence, and you have ruined the Sultan's launch.'

'Yes, and what will Mr. Stackpole say to that?' Donnelly lamented. 'You don't know how particular he is about property expended on active service.'

Miss Fyffe-Harrison nodded, with a friendly smile. It softened her heart to find this ruffian, as she had regarded him, so resourceful and so considerate of a comrade's feelings.

'With this wind blowing harder every minute,' said she, 'you and I and the rest of us are going to be blown away to God knows where. It is too late to get into the harbor if we wanted to. We fiddled about too long.'

XIX

THE dhow ceased the laboring effort to pass inside the low islands which were veiled except in glimpses when the sheets of rain parted as one might draw gray curtains aside. She surged seaward over a carpet of foam while the pliant yard of the reefed sail bent like a whip to the gusts whose temper was becoming furious. The four dripping men clung doggedly at the tiller. They could be trusted to defy exhaustion so long as Captain Selim Majid kept that one good eye on them. He was more to be dreaded than a typhoon.

Seeking shelter in a corner of the deck, Martin Donnelly said to his boyish shipmate:

'We are elected again, Kid, me and you and the chief pay clerk and little Moses Mahomet Ali. If the pup can put a stopper on the jinx, it's about time he took charge. Wow, look at those black thunder clouds and feel the weight of the wind already. It's due to be a screamer.'

'Some zephyr, Martin. Let's hunt the cabin and hold Mr. Stackpole's hand. I wonder do we eat?'

'We better had, boy, before this old basket rolls any worse. And where do we berth? On the floor of the cabin?'

'Too near that woman's stateroom,' objected the Kid. 'If nobody minds, I'd sooner take a chance in the cage with the lion.'

Donnelly vanished below after expressing the wistful hope that Miss Fyffe-Harrison might have talked herself to a standstill. William Sprague preferred to stick it out on deck a while longer. It was less tempestuous than the woman in the cabin and he was not so hardened to life's rude contacts as the brawny machinist's mate. He found a thrill in watching the clumsy vessel wage her intrepid contest for survival. Flogged by the shrieking wind, the seas now rose and curled in frothing crests. They swung the dhow with a giddy motion. The square stern lifted. The low bows squattered or were buried in cascades of green water. The dhow lunged headlong like a frightened horse, but at a sharp word from Captain Selim Majid the sweating helmsmen checked the wild impulse to yaw this way or that.

A sporty game, said William to himself, and more kick to it than a scout cruiser doing a test run. To his dismay he soon became conscious of qualms in the region of his belt. It was not hunger, but quite the contrary. He had been seasick when the slim *Toledo* had fought through the heavy blow in the Gulf of Aden, but since then he had flattered himself that he was a gob with his sea-legs under him. This crazy dhow, however, had a motion of its own. The suffering young man wondered why he had raised such a fuss about breakfast.

Wanly he clung to a rope's end and let the rain and spray pelt him. The best thing the dhow could do was to hit a reef and finish the job. Any guy that would join the Navy to see the world was a nut.

During this crisis the melancholy William beheld Martin Donnelly rise out of the cabin hatchway, rugged and untouched by calamity. He had borrowed a tarred storm-coat from a peg on the cabin wall. Swaying on deck, he turned to lend a hand to none other than Miss Fyffe-Harrison who was enveloped in yellow oilskins. They passed quite close to William Sprague who saw Donnelly grin and hated him for it. The woman, however, bestowed a glance akin to pity. She was forgiven.

She clung to the arm of the machinist's mate as they lurched forward. The wind blew their words away. It made no difference to the Kid. He was not listening. For all he cared they might be in search of a parson to marry them. What Donnelly was saying ran like this, bellowed in the woman's ear:

'Yes, ma'am, I'll be glad to help you see that the lion is secured all taut and proper. The crew is too busy. We don't want that cage to go adrift, do we? And I can lash those mats so they will keep some of the salt water off him. An elegant lion, I'll say it through a loud speaker. How come you to park him on this dhow? Was he a marked down sale or something?'

'Precisely that, Donnelly,' the woman answered in a responsive voice. 'I discovered George — the lion's name is George — in the yard of a Mombasa trader who had him fastened by a chain. The poor beast had been caught as a cub, but he was growing so fast that his owner had decided to kill him for his hide. George was really too big to play with any longer. The natives were afraid of him.'

'But he didn't scare you, ma'am,' earnestly exclaimed Donnelly. 'You walked right up to George and scratched his head and he purred like a kitten.'

'How in the world did you guess it?' cried Miss Fyffe-Harrison. 'You are ever so much more intelligent than you look.'

'Oh, you didn't have to tell me. Actions speak louder than words.'

She seemed to take this in the complimentary sense intended and amiably explained:

'Yes, George purred when I petted him, but not like a kitten. It was more like a motor exhaust. Will you believe I was able to purchase George for seventeen pounds? An enormous bargain!'

'Women can't resist bargains, not even in lions,' was her escort's comment. 'And what do you expect to do with George? He wouldn't fit on anybody's parlor mantelpiece.'

'What a quaint remark, Donnelly! Fancy saying such a thing of a lion.'

'It was an elephant I had in mind,' was the cryptic remark. 'But he got away from me in Zanzibar.'

This was entirely too much for Miss Fyffe-Harrison. She was rapidly forgetting that she had appraised this American sailor as a perfectly impossible person. He was an original character, and she collected them as other people go in for pottery, baskets, or old furniture. Nor could she help admiring his hardy indifference to the raging rain squalls and the dangers of this impromptu voyage into the unknown. She was about to ask him the

fascinating riddle of the elephant and the mantelpiece when a wave roared over the bulwark and knocked them both flat. Breathless but unharmed, they resumed the slow journey along the reeling, slippery deck. What Donnelly had to say was shouted in fragments like these:

'Steady, ma'am, here comes another walloper . . . and so the elephant kicked a native cop in the stomach . . . here, grab hold of that hatch-cover . . . it was time for us to run away with the Bu-bu-bu Express . . . When this dhow sticks her nose clean under like that, I am surprised to see her come up again . . . and there was no box-car for the elephant so I had to leave him in the garden . . . and then we ran afoul of the lady ghost that had been buried alive . . .'

Miss Fyffe-Harrison felt too bewildered for comment, besides which she had swallowed too much salt water to keep up a conversation. They came to George's cage and found that the curtains of matting had been hastily tied down, but the wind was tearing them to tatters. The lion crouched disconsolate, his head between his paws. He looked up, stalked grandly to the bars, and balanced himself against the erratic motion of the deck. Miss Fyffe-Harrison stretched out a hand and rubbed the black muzzle, stroked the ears, and tickled the heavy neck which had not yet grown a mane. George purred.

'Will you listen to that?' chuckled Donnelly. 'You stepped on his self-starter, ma'am. Hittin' on all six and plenty of power. Don't you feel nervous?'

'Not a bit. Pet him yourself. He dislikes Captain Selim Majid, I suspect the man has not been nice to him. The Arabs are a cruel breed. They seem to enjoy tormenting animals.'

'George has that bandit sized up right, Miss F. Harrison. A lion-tamer like you can handle him, but my own idea is that your skipper would murder an aged widow for the gold fillings in her back teeth.'

Dextrously Donnelly passed additional ropes around the cage and bound the matting tight. He stretched a tarpaulin to shelter the windward side of the cage. Then he found a coil of light hawser and pulled it over to the roof, making fast to a cleat and a ring-bolt in the deck. If not comfortable, George was at least protected against disaster unless the dhow should be pounded to pieces. His mistress was cordially grateful. Carefully her companion conducted her to the cabin without mishap, a strong man and competent, who seemed to take all hazards as commonplace. Her verdict was that he had made himself an endurable shipmate.

Having seen her safely to the door of her stateroom, the stalwart cavalier turned his attention to Mr. Cassius Stackpole who had attached himself to the heavy wooden chest by means of a bit of cord passed around his middle. The chest was belayed to a beam, wherefore Mr. Stackpole could not slide back and forth across the floor. Never florid and seldom exposed to the sun, his complexion had now bleached to an ashen hue and he was unable to force

a smile of welcome. Recognizing the symptoms, Donnelly said soothingly:

'You never served in destroyers, sir. It might have educated you to stand this. For years you paraded around in battleships —'

'In my long experience,' dolefully murmured the chief pay clerk, 'I have never, never felt like this. I am not actively ill, Donnelly, you understand, but depressed — woozy in the head — no initiative. Do you think the dhow will live through it?'

'Like a duck. Noah did a voyage in a tub like this, only bigger, and never sprung a leak or carried away a rope yarn. He had lions in his cargo, too, same as us. Have you and Beatrice been making faces at each other? She did a thaw for me just now. Her temperature climbed up almost to zero.'

'I asked her please to be good enough to let me alone, for the present,' sighed Mr. Stackpole. 'I need company more sympathetic. Where is the Kid?'

'Takin' the air, in large gulps. His spirits are all battened down for once. He hasn't even asked a question about the beautiful Zuleida, pearl of the Orient, who is still tucked under hatches. Well, this dirty weather may blow itself out to-morrow. Rainy gales like this never last very long in these waters. Then the good old northeast monsoon will resume business. And we can shove along to the south'ard.'

'Where to, Donnelly? The *Toledo* will sail sharp at noon to-morrow from Zanzibar if the weather clears. She won't mind poking into a heavy sea. Ten days' absence without leave *and we are de-*

clared deserters from the United States Navy! The law is strictly enforced and extenuating circumstances haven't a ghost of a chance. It is bad enough for you and young Sprague — I realize that — but for a man of my years' service and excellent record — a warrant officer —'

Mr. Stackpole's emotions halted his speech. He was in a state of mind and body to take the blackest view of his misfortunes. Donnelly perceived this and easily answered:

'They won't tie the can to us until the ten days are up. And that is ten days from now. With that much leeway, you don't know what we may pull off. Look at the things you couldn't possibly believe that have happened to us since the sun went down yesterday.'

Mr. Stackpole looked the picture of pessimism and had nothing more to say. He had been wrenched from a methodical, dignified orbit into a mad world of violence and commotion. Never had he appeared to poorer advantage. But he almost smiled when the pallid William Sprague came sprawling into the cabin, rolled over on a rug, and feebly spluttered:

'Say, Mr. Stackpole, do I look as awful as you? I'll match you to see who pays for the undertaker.'

This levity awakened no jocular response. The Kid subsided. With his head on his arm he went to sleep. The rug slid with him, but he showed signs of life only when his head bumped something. Miss Fyffe-Harrison remained in her stateroom. Once she was seen to come out and collect a tin of biscuit,

a teapot, and a jar of jam from a closet for which she had a key. Mr. Stackpole averted his gaze. It was incredibly heartless in the woman to flaunt the fact that she had an appetite.

Martin Donnelly was reminded by the aches in his bones that he, too, needed sleep. There was nothing to interfere with it. Captain Selim Majid appeared to require no extra men. The cabin therefore became silent but for the incessant lamentations of the pegged timbers of the straining hull and the swash of water on deck.

'No watches to stand,' comfortably muttered the machinist's mate, 'and no hundred and fifty degrees in the fireroom to wilt you like a rag. Things are never so bad that they couldn't be a hell of a sight worse. Atta boy! Rocked in the cradle of the deep!'

Occasionally one of the Arabs — the captain, the mate, or the boatswain — flitted into the cabin, bare-footed and water-soaked. He brewed coffee over the fire-box, gobbling a bowl of rice and fish or munching a handful of dates. By turn they stretched themselves on rugs, excepting Selim Majid who took no rest and maintained his vigil beside the long tiller on the poop deck.

XX

Soon after nightfall the rain ceased and the wind was shorn of its ferocious strength. It still blew half a gale, veering from the south to the east, and urging the dhow away from the African coast into the rolling, empty wastes of the Indian Ocean. A reef was shaken out of the lofty lateen sail which lifted toward the stars that were beginning to gleam through rifts in the gloomy canopy of clouds. The main sheet was hauled closer inboard while the weary sailors tailed on in a row and gasped out their sing-song pulling chantey that was perhaps as old as the ruins of the cities buried in the sands of Arabia.

Yu-lah! Yah-sa-laa-oh!
The boat will sail.
The mast is tall.
Beat the drum.
By the favor of God
She will go in safety.

The vessel was steadied by the bellying canvas. Obediently she leaned to its pressure and no longer dreaded to be overwhelmed by the onrush of following seas. Once again this wandering dhow of ancient pattern had vanquished the evil spirits that seek to slay stout ships and mariners.

Through the night the easterly wind crept more into the north until at dawn the seasonable monsoon, cool, steady, and strong, had resumed its sway. In dazzling sunlight, on a sea that breathed in long

swells all blue and silver, the small vessel ploughed her lonely furrow. It was a day joyous to behold. Something of this altered mood communicated itself to the people who had taken refuge in the cabin.

Mr. Stackpole no longer mourned a naval career overtaken by disgrace. Donnelly was making a neat crutch for him from a piece of bamboo pole. William Sprague whistled as he helped a half-grown Swahili cabin-boy set the room to rights. They found breakfast on deck and felt sociably inclined, but Captain Selim Majid was grimly taciturn. It was plain to read that he liked these three infidel intruders from the swift warship no more than he did the insolent woman under whose orders he sailed.

Martin Donnelly borrowed a razor and a cake of salt-water soap from the Arab boatswain. He still belonged to Uncle Sam's Navy even though he had been violently detached from the same. Slackness was a crime, dirtiness the unpardonable sin. Grasping William Sprague by the back of the neck he propelled him forward, booming in his ear:

'You are a lovely sight for inspection at general quarters, I don't think. Your division officer would holler murder, you disreputable young scut.'

'How can I help it?' protested the Kid. 'This has been one rough liberty for guys that went ashore in whites. You are a terrible sight yourself. We can't scrub and wash clothes, can we?'

'Hush your clatter. I'll show you. What does a gob know about sailorin' in these scout cruisers with their laundries and luxuries like that?'

A secluded spot was found behind the shelter of George, the lion. Here they splashed and labored with a wooden bucket until the critical Donnelly called a halt. They tied their uniforms in the rigging for a little while and then put them on damp. Sun and wind would finish drying them.

'Now for Old Man Stackpole,' said Donnelly. 'He deserves our kind attention.'

A palaver in the forecastle and coins changed hands. The energetic machinist's mate reappeared with a roll of white cotton sheeting under his arm. William followed him aft to the cabin and obediently did sentry duty to guard against the inconvenient entrance of the ladies. Presto, and the grateful chief pay clerk was stripped of a uniform smeared with the coal-dust of the Bu-bu-bu Express. Donnelly swathed him in sheeting, with a rope girdle. It had the effect of a toga. Mr. Stackpole's dignity was not only restored but enhanced. All he needed was a rostrum from which to address the Populus Romanus.

'Run along with his gear and scrub it till you drop in your tracks, Kid,' commanded Martin. 'I will shave him if he don't mind a few nicks. No wonder the lady lion-tamer didn't love us.'

After a broken, anxious night, Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison rested in her room until well into the morning. She was not proof against the wear-and-tear of such an adventure as this. Meanwhile Mr. Stackpole, with his crutch, had been assisted to reach the deck where in the sweeter air he reclined

in the shade of an awning. Now he suggested, in his snowy robe of sheeting, the admiral of some Arabian flagship cruising in search of the enemy. William Sprague, having dutifully scrubbed until his arms ached, had rejoined his comrades aft.

They were discussing their situation without whimpering about it. It was a harrowing thought, of course, that with the favoring turn of weather the *Toledo* would sail from Zanzibar at noon of this same day. And the dhow had been blown so far out of the cruiser's course that there was not the remotest chance of their sighting each other.

They were smitten suddenly silent, feeling on the defensive, when Miss Fyffe-Harrison came up from the cabin. It did not escape them that she looked more feminine and less austere than when they had previously encountered her. Rather like a hostess than a keeper, let us say. Instead of riding breeches and puttees she wore a white skirt and silk stockings. A finely woven straw hat covered the bobbed hair. For a woman of her age the trim figure and supple carriage conveyed an impression engagingly youthful. Time had penciled its tiny lines at the corners of her eyes. The wavy hair had lost its sheen. Still, as she stood there, with the sky behind her, on this bright, buoyant morning, she was a woman to arrest and please the eye.

Forgetting his injured ankle, Mr. Stackpole made a courteous effort to rise, but she bade him be sensible. She was gazing at him with the liveliest astonishment. And yet his novel garb did not evoke her

mirth. In fact, Cassius Stackpole was not ridiculous at all. It was impossible to believe that he had been a crumpled ruin on the cabin floor. What he now appeared to be was a masterful man in repose, ready for whatever other crises might befall.

This was more than skin deep. Tenacious are the bonds and obligations of the naval service. In a word, Mr. Stackpole was 'the senior officer present.' This was already working in his soul like a potent ferment. The shackles of the paymaster's office had been shaken off. It was for him to assume a leadership which his rank implied in such circumstances as these.

Toward the Englishwoman Martin Donnelly was polite but wary and ready to dodge. The only link between them was George, the lion, and, as he mentally observed, a party in which a woman and a lion were actors was pretty ticklish and uncertain. It was the volatile William who did the gallant thing and hastened to remark:

'You are sure there with the class this morning, Miss Fyffe-Harrison. The idea of this poor simp of a Donnelly making the break that you were old enough to be my mother. A few bad ones like that and he will rate as a Mormon — I mean a moron. And how did Miss Zuleida stand the rotten weather? I'm interested to get a look at her, of course, because the only time I saw her she was a phantom.'

Did the self-sufficient woman, so superior to the follies of her sex, wince a little at this? Did she feel the sting of a vanity which dreaded comparison with

the springtime of youth and beauty? By way of a counter-thrust she was guilty of hurting Mr. Stackpole's feelings.

'Zuleida is in the cabin. I will present you to her, if you like. She is particularly anxious to thank Mr. Stackpole for giving her life and freedom. She calls him her benevolent parent.'

The benefactor was plainly annoyed. In his revived condition and altered mood he felt not at all like the parent of a grown-up daughter. Presently Donnelly propped him on the crutch and lent him a hand down the cabin stairway.

The girl who had fled from the household of the dread Azzan-bin-Hassin was standing at one of the stern windows, dreamily staring at the azure sea. Her face was unveiled. Possibly her scruples in this respect were not profound. At any rate she made no effort to conceal her enchantments from the sight of these other voyagers with whom her lot had been cast.

It was rather cruel in a way for the Englishwoman, twice this exotic creature's age, to have to suffer the comparison. This may have been the feline Zuleida's intention. Life had no savor unless men were inflamed by the desire to possess her, unless they regarded her as a prize to be won by purses of gold or the verdict of the sword. In threatening to slay her, Azzan-bin-Hassin may have had provocation.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole, worldly wise and observant, was conscious of some such impressions as these. In the enforced rôle of a benevolent parent he could

study the girl and arrive at his own conclusions. Arab she was, but he wondered what other blood might be in her veins, blood of the wanderers who had peopled the ports of the East African coast from the days of the Portuguese navigators. A warm tint was in her olive cheek. Her smile was vivacious, like the Latins of the Mediterranean. The dark eyes sparkled with a coquetry that made no pretense of shyness. She was as much at ease among these infidel strangers as in the white-washed courtyard of her own home in Dar-es Salaam.

Offering a hand to Mr. Stackpole in the European fashion she said in a voice like soft music:

'T'ank you mooch, Effendi. I no spik ze Eengleesh.'

Mr. Stackpole tried to convey that she did not have to make herself understood in words. It was delightful enough to look and listen. Her glance wandered from his bald brow and portly person to the limber, debonair William Sprague. Her expressive eyes kindled with tender interest. She turned to Miss Fyffe-Harrison and made a laughing remark in the Swahili vernacular of the coast. It was so obviously complimentary to the young seaman that he appeared distressed. Rightly he feared the brutal comments of Martin Donnelly who was poking him in the ribs. The fair Zuleida let her long lashes flutter. Dutifully the Kid stepped forward. Her little hand lingered in his hard palm until he snatched it away.

He was a lad for whom many a girl at home had displayed a liking. But no beautiful doll could play him for an easy mark, he said to himself, and it would take a smoother line than this to get him going. With an air of polite indifference he informed the susceptible Zuleida that he was pleased to meet her. Then he withdrew, at which she was visibly piqued. The cynical Donnelly hoarsely whispered in his ear:

'Watch your step, Kid. You can't help breakin' their hearts, but don't you go trifling with this here belle of Dar-es Salaam. She fell for you hard. This voyage is crazy enough without any dynamite in it.'

'A peacherino, Martin, I'll tell my little red diary,' was the serious reply, 'but she can't lure me on to destruction with her fatal charms. I am too wise a guy. And I got a girl in Bridgeport.'

'The one you bought the ivory beads for at Brother Mooloo's?' said Donnelly. 'Well, Kid, she had better say "*Wallah*," "*Wallah*," "*Wallah*," or she is liable to lose you. When this Zuleida flashes her lamps on you a couple more times —'

'Listen, old-timer, there is one thing I won't let you josh me about,' William sternly exclaimed. 'I like to meet people and look 'em over when I am on a tour of the world this way, but I have no intention of falling in love with anybody, understand? Not that I'm engaged to the girl in Bridgeport — she has sort of put me on probation — but she has absolutely first call.'

Mr. Stackpole was airing his curious smattering of Arabic and Swahili to which Zuleida paid

absent-minded attention. Her gaze roamed to the obdurate young seaman. She was wistfully appealing. He was her chosen champion. He could comprehend her even though they spoke only the language of the heart. This was the message she sought to make clear.

It was a romantic tableau interrupted by the entrance of Captain Selim Majid. He had resumed his attire of bright and clashing colors and was unusually adorned. An inlaid sword was thrust through the crimson sash, an embroidered white jacket covered the lean brown shoulders. Silently he joined the group in the cabin.

Zuleida was startled. This one-eyed rover with the seamed cheek and savage mien had been previously descried by her only as a vague figure moving in the moonlight when she had found refuge in the dhow. Was it recognition or mere apprehension that caused her to shrink from his presence and hastily to draw a fold of the drapery across her face?

Selim Majid stared at her with eager, animal cupidity. If she was, by nature, desirous of making men greedy to possess her, it was manifest that she had swiftly kindled the ardor of this Arab mariner. For once, however, she had found a man whom she felt no impulse to beguile or ensnare. On the contrary she was mortally afraid of him. He strode over and addressed her in accents harsh and domineering.

The girl clung to the arm of Miss Fyffe-Harrison

who stood perplexed but with poise unshaken. A cool gesture, a few sharp words, and she persuaded Captain Selim Majid to betake himself elsewhere. He went reluctantly, after a hesitation that was ominous. The duties of a chaperon carried a hint of difficulty. The atmosphere of the cabin had become curiously surcharged, as if a spark might explode it.

Zuleida's coquetry had been snuffed out. Her warmly tinted cheek paled. She watched the spare figure of Captain Selim Majid until he vanished through the hatchway. Then she murmured something, a hand fluttering to her breast. She would return to the stateroom, she intimated. The rough weather had tried her strength. The motion of the vessel still affected her.

As soon as they were alone, Martin Donnelly confided to Mr. Stackpole:

'I dunno as I ever saw a party get itself all set for trouble as sudden as this. It reminds me of one time when a next-door neighbor of mine in Bridgeport was experimentin' with home brew. This poor goof blew his kitchen up and a stove-lid whizzed so close to my dear old mother that it knocked a clothes-pin right out from between her teeth.'

'We must warn the Kid to keep out of the girl's way,' agreed the chief pay clerk. 'She is going to act foolish about him. And what do you think of this Selim Majid? Has he seen her before? It looked that way to me.'

'Maybe he has. My hunch is that he tried for her

somewhere else and failed to qualify. These Muscat dhows make a voyage a year down this coast. Anyhow, he wants her now, and I size him up as a go-getter.'

XXI

It was not easy to alarm the fearless Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison who was accustomed to wield authority. Unmolested she had lived and moved among peoples of untamed manners and morals. Although he looked to be as sincere a pirate as ever slitted a gullet or scuttled an honest merchantman, Captain Selim Majid had served her with fidelity. The scene in the cabin had revealed him in a new rôle. However, the Englishwoman had not taken it seriously. She saw no reason for distrusting him. He was merely a sensual Arab who coveted a comely girl as he might have been eager to own a handsome horse or a graceful ship.

She might have dismissed the episode from her logical mind had it not been for the distracted behavior of Zuleida, after her flight to the privacy of the stateroom. The girl was in tears, shaking with terror, a pitiable waif of fortune with no other friend in whom to confide.

Yes, she faltered, she had seen this Selim Majid before, when he had made a trading voyage to Dares Salaam. As one of his errands he had been in search of a beautiful young wife. Her parents had bargained with him but he had been unable to satisfy their demands. He had sailed away very angry, swearing to come again. Now the conditions were all in his favor. Poor Zuleida was damaged goods. In

Zanzibar she had not even been divorced by Azzan-bin-Hassin. Her parents would be anxious to get rid of her. She had disgraced them. Such inducements as Captain Selim Majid might offer would be accepted after the usual wrangling to extort more backsheesh.

Zuleida was young and loved life. She longed for a husband whom she could love and worship — who would be kind to her — such a one as the adorable sailor boy from America with the rosy cheek and the jolly smile — she had no objection to being the wife of such a Christian infidel as that — of course he might not wish to marry her, but if she could be his sweetheart, his slave, and be taken far away from Dar-es Salaam . . .

Miss Fyffe-Harrison was properly shocked by such frank wantonness. In certain essentials she confessed to a Victorian complex. She told the girl to banish such immoral rot from her silly little head. Selim Majid was an objectionable husband, no doubt of that, and to let Zuleida fall into his hands would be tossing her from the frying-pan into the fire. To protect the girl was the only decent thing to do and Miss Fyffe-Harrison was never one to shirk a duty.

If necessary, the troublesome Zuleida could be placed under British guardianship of some kind in Dar-es Salaam until the sinister Selim Majid should have vanished below the horizon in his battered dhow. Miss Fyffe-Harrison felt inclined to forsake the vessel and travel more conventionally. She was getting fed up with local color and picturesque ex-

periences. They were beginning to wear on her. The emotional Zuleida was a trying shipmate, not to mention the three involuntary passengers from *U.S.S. Toledo*.

Several hours later Mr. Stackpole happened to be alone with his thoughts in the cool lounging-place of the poop deck. He was again in his uniform which was clean although somewhat wrinkled. The brass buttons had been polished. On the front of the cap was the emblem of the American eagle. The warrant officer felt more like himself. In the toga he had assumed a certain aspect of grandeur, but he had resembled a piece of statuary. And this peculiar situation demanded action and initiative. He realized that Donnelly and William Sprague were expecting him to play his part. On shipboard, as they now were, he was the nominal leader by virtue of his rank. During that lurid night in Zanzibar he had been a pawn of destiny.

He had ceased to be afraid of Miss Fyffe-Harrison. In fact, he was about to send a message to her when she came out of the cabin. For her part, she was revising her opinion of the chief pay clerk. She had been flagrantly rude and caddish. Distinctions of naval caste aboard this vagrant dhow were rather rubbishy. There was nothing in Mr. Stackpole's behavior to indicate that he was not a gentleman. She did not appear to resent it when he asked, with a note of authority in his voice:

'What are your plans, if you please? Isn't it about time you told me?'

'Why, I intend to go to Dar-es Salaam. Zanzibar is quite out of the question. The Sultan's launch will need a lot of mending. And it would do you no good, now that your cruiser has sailed. With this wind we ought to make Dar-es Salaam to-morrow.'

'To put the girl ashore?' sharply queried Mr. Stackpole. 'Does any other business call you there?'

'Yes, I have decided to leave the beastly dhow and wait for a mail steamer.'

'Umm'm, that leaves us stranded, Miss Fyffe-Harrison.'

'No more than you will be stranded anywhere else on the coast,' she replied, with signs of temper. 'I wish to Heaven I had put you aboard your ship that morning off Zanzibar harbor. It might have been done, but your Donnelly rubbed me the wrong way and the whole affair was very confusing, what with this wretched Zuleida girl and so on. But I have no idea of turning you adrift as derelicts. You must take money enough to carry you to the United States if you have to chase your ship that far.'

To become objects of charity was far from pleasing to Mr. Stackpole. Indignation suffused his solid features. Abruptly he told the woman what was in his mind.

'That may sound fair enough to you, but please remember how unreasonable you were in the first place. No amount of money can square it. There was plenty of time that morning to sail into the harbor before the weather broke and Azzan-bin-

Hassin got after us in the launch. But you had to argue and dilly-dally to show us you were the boss. And we had to let you have your own way because you were a woman. What you fail to realize now is that losing our ship is a great deal worse than an inconvenience. It means that we are deserters!'

Her resentment at being scolded could not suppress an emotion of genuine sympathy as she cried:

'My word, Mr. Stackpole! Was I letting you in for anything as serious as that? But you did not run away from your ship. I shanghaied you.'

'It makes no difference,' he declared. 'Now listen carefully. This is the show-down. I am no navigator but I have learned to know my way about. It was a hobby of mine when I was younger to study charts and pilot directions and to learn to know the stars. It was not my ambition to become a chief pay clerk, but — er — that is another story. The *Toledo* left Zanzibar at noon to-day. She will lay a straight course for Mozambique which is about six hundred miles to the southward. Her schedule calls for a three days' visit in port. There is a fighting chance that with this prevailing wind, if it keeps steady, the dhow might reach Mozambique before the *Toledo* sails from there. It seemed a hopeless gamble until I did some careful figuring.'

Mr. Stackpole paused to let this sink in. Miss Fyffe-Harrison took advantage of the interim to exclaim:

'To Mozambique? But Captain Selim Majid has never sailed farther south than Zanzibar and Dar-

es Salaam. I doubt if he would try it. He would be likely to lose himself.'

'Then I will have to show him,' was the stubborn declaration. 'Great Scott, he can aim in the general direction, can't he? He is bound to know it when he hits the African coast. Then he can ask a policeman or something. I shall have to put it to you straight, Miss Fyffe-Harrison. It is our turn now. And I would sooner see the dhow founder or break her back on a reef than to throw up the sponge and quit without trying.'

The intrepid woman sat with her chin in her hand. It was a feminine chin but an obstinate one. She gazed steadily at the heavily built warrant officer who had so unexpectedly asserted himself. Her interest in him was grave and inquiring. She had conceived a lively respect for him. It seemed advisable to treat him with kindness, like George, the lion.

'Possibly I deserve to be bullied a bit,' she went so far as to admit.

'Oh, I don't mean to do that, but we have to look at this thing straight in the eye. We will do everything in our power for your comfort and safety, but it means you will have to stay in the dhow a few days longer. I hope you'll consent without a row.'

'Tit for tat, Mr. Stackpole? I ran off with you and now you propose to do the same for me? But why can't we touch at Dar-es Salaam? You can leave me there, don't you know, with the lovely young nuisance of a Zuleida.'

'Because we can't afford to lose a day,' he doggedly asserted. 'Didn't I make that clear? And I doubt very much if your rascally skipper would leave the girl behind and steer for Mozambique. He has no intention of letting that feminine prize package get out of his sight.'

'I understand,' said she. 'Mozambique is in Portuguese East Africa. I presume I can find a British consulate and arrange to ship Zuleida back to her home by steamer. It doesn't matter about me. My plans are quite adjustable.'

There was an intimation in her manner that she felt resigned to the fate of prolonging the voyage in the dhow. Mr. Cassius Stackpole was rapidly improving on acquaintance. And what else could be done than to agree with a man who was calmly determined to have his own way? A *modus vivendi* established, they naturally fell into talk more personal. Two inveterate travelers found many topics of mutual interest. Her home was in Devon. He had actually seen the old family place when motoring out from Plymouth where his battleship had spent a week. Veering back to the issue in hand, she said with a troubled frown:

'Please don't "bawl me out," as Donnelly says, but what about money if we fail to catch your cruiser at Mozambique? Can you send a cable or a radio to the ship for it?'

'Perhaps, but we won't worry about that till we have to. I have some money with me. I was expecting to buy two or three good rugs when I went ashore in Zanzibar.'

'I shall offer Selim Majid and his crew a month's extra pay if they can win the race to Mozambique,' declared the sporting Beatrice.

'Let me deal with the outfit,' said he, without bravado. 'If money fails to get results —'

He had risen to the occasion, preparing to take command should the emergency arise. It was necessary that this woman should respect him. It was the masculine instinct. He was like a boulder which it would be hard shoving out of the way. Beatrice was candidly respectful as she inquired:

'Supposing Selim Majid kicks up a shindy and refuses to change course from Dar-es Salaam?'

'Well, Miss Fyffe-Harrison,' he thundered at her, 'wouldn't it be damned humiliating for an officer and two men of the United States Navy to knuckle under to this one-eyed rogue from Muscat? We should certainly hate ourselves.'

'Oh-h!' said she, 'and you are the man I dared to insult to your face when you came aboard? How courageous of me!' She glanced at his bandaged ankle and added, 'And crippled, at that. Bless me, what will you be like with a pair of perfectly good legs?'

'I can move about on a crutch if I have to,' he replied. 'Now will you be good enough to send for Captain Selim Majid and give him the orders to shift his helm for Mozambique?'

The turbaned mariner came quickly. He bowed profound obeisance. His predatory countenance was almost amiable, nor did he display anger or sur-

prise when told that the dhow must undertake the longer voyage in seas unknown to him. It was for him to obey. Wherever her noble and exalted ladyship wished him to carry her, he would be her faithful servant. With the aid of the sun and the stars he would find the path to the strange coast of Mozambique. The dhow would be urged to the utmost. Aye, the dogs of sailors would feel the bite of the lash if they slackened effort. And he, the loyal Selim Majid, boldest seaman of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, would sleep not at all, by day or night, while the wind blew. When he retired with a tread light and silent, Cassius Stackpole commented to Miss Fyffe-Harrison:

'Too easy. Much too easy. By rights he should kick up a fuss and sputter all sorts of objections. He is not forgetting that girl for a second. And he would much prefer to have her landed at Dar-es Salaam where he knows his way about. A slippery customer and harder to handle than if he had turned ugly.'

XXII

It was the frivolous William Sprague who shattered the scheme of things. It verified the adage that children should not play with fire. Late in the afternoon Mr. Stackpole had retired to the cabin for a nap. Martin Donnelly was somewhere forward on an errand connected with soap and water and a wooden bucket. Escaping the notice of her chaperon, William had no trouble in coaxing the infatuated Zuleida to accompany him to a pleasant, fairly secluded nook on deck, in the shadow of the great sail. She veiled her face for this excursion and was able to make the youth comprehend that only his splendid valor could lull her fears of the evil Selim Majid.

William had no intention of getting himself entangled. He was in the mood to while away an idle hour. Ennui had laid hold upon his soul. Peace and quiet were an irksome anticlimax. Also he had concluded, after due reflection, that he needed experience as a man of the world, and that it might be of some value to him to be vamped by this jewel of the harem.

Having made her comfortable with several cushions, it occurred to him to teach the responsive Zuleida a few fragments of the English language. She was an apt and eager pupil. Trustfully she echoed his words as well as she could. Soulful were the glances wasted on her schoolmaster, in vain the

passion that thrilled her voice. Demurely, earnestly, William repeated the first lesson while she strove to memorize it. Soon she was dutifully assuring him:

'*I loafe mah husban', but oah, yo' Kid!*'

'Once more, Zuleida, and put more snap into it. "I *love* my husband," not "*loafe.*" And bear down on "*Oh, you Kid.*" That's more like it. I feel my heart flutter, girlie, for the first time since you crossed my path.'

'*Oah, yo' Kid!*' rapturously murmured Zuleida, convinced that she had found the magic word.

'That's hot off the bat, tootsie. I am liable to skid if I don't put chains on. Now say, *Hello, Donnelly, you big stiff.*'

Her eyes aglow with tenderness, Zuleida clasped her hands and leaned closer to sigh:

'*Ullo, Donnellee, yo' beeg 'tiff.*'

'Grand! The machinist's mate will kiss you for that,' applauded William. Boredom was banished. He was enjoying himself. 'Let me see. Can't we hang one on Mr. Stackpole? Between you and me and the scuttle-butt, Zuleida, he and Miss Fyffe-Harrison have begun to take notice of each other. I am wise to the symptoms. It may be one of those middle-aged romances where they have climbed to the top of the hill and gaze hand-in-hand toward the sunset of life. All set, girlie. *How's your wife and six children, old man?*'

After several attempts, the deluded flower of Dares Salaam repeated, with deep feeling:

'*Ow's youah wife an' seex childun, ol' man?*'

It was enough that the superb young sailor was talking to her with so much ardent sincerity in his manly voice. Love knew no language nor required one. Love was swift and hot like the wind that blew from the desert. Somehow Zuleida felt that the outpourings of the heart could be most fervently expressed in the phrase, '*But-oah-yo'-Kid.*' She gave it a rhythmic intonation. It sounded like Arabic as she said it over and over.

The perfidious William was becoming intoxicated by the very sound of these caressing words. He had forgotten the girl in Bridgeport who had wisely placed him on probation. It was his desire that Zuleida should lift her veil. 'Stow awnings,' he called it. If he snatched a kiss, she wouldn't scream or pull any stuff like that. Alas, it will be apparent that William Sprague was skidding. His pupil was aware of the fact. It was she who glanced to left and right to make sure they were unobserved. Her slim fingers stole to the gold pins which held the filmy fabric across her shapely nose.

At this interesting moment there came striding from forward of the mast the lean, truculent figure of Captain Selim Majid. He was presumed to be aft and invisible. Some routine business or other had taken him to the forecastle. The creaking of the spars and the piping of the monsoon through the cordage made his approach inaudible. The misguided William was keeping a slack watch.

Zuleida's veil fell from her glowing face. Her scamp of a tutor slid an arm around her neck and . . .

There was a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. It was a thwarted kiss.

Captain Selim Majid was, by nature, a sudden man. Crafty suppression was flung to the winds. His one baleful eye beheld the jewel of his desire profaned by the hand of an infidel lover. To kill them both was the instant purpose of this vengeful Arab who saw them through a red mist of rage. Snatching the curved sword from his sash, he whirled it over his head as he bounded forward.

The victims were frozen by the shadow of death. They could do nothing to save themselves. Instinctively the unhappy William drew the pallid Zuleida closer. Her eyes were tight shut. It was the end, such an end as she had perhaps averted when fleeing from the possession of her lawful master, Azzan-bin-Hassin.

Martin Donnelly was just then sauntering from the bow of the vessel. In his hand was the wooden bucket. If cleanliness is next to godliness, he was sure of salvation. He stepped around the mast at the instant when Selim Majid's sword was flashing in the preliminary flourish essential to the art of slaughter as practiced by the fiery tribesmen of Muscat.

Donnelly's bare feet slapped the deck in two long leaps. He swung the heavy bucket, but not with graceful flourishes. He disliked waste motion. The bucket smote the sinewy wrist of Selim Majid. The sword flew from his hand and tinkled on the planks. Deliberately the machinist's mate picked up the

weapon and tossed it overboard. It was a precious sword, wonderfully chased and inlaid.

The captain of the dhow was not entirely disarmed. He plucked at the short dagger inside his jacket, but thought better of it. The hairy ogre of an American sailor had a long reach and, moreover, he still gripped that wooden bucket. Discreetly Selim Majid withdrew from the field of battle, rubbing a bruised wrist.

He said certain things as he retreated. They were so dreadful that Zuleida clapped her hands to her ears. She was no fainting heroine. Now that she lived and breathed again, it was all deliciously exciting. Strong men were fighting over her. They would be at each other's throats before the voyage was finished. She was the prize!

Martin Donnelly was in no such blithesome mood as this. Sourly he regarded the guilty William and snarled:

'You miserable bone-head! I have a good mind to wallop the tar out of you with this here bucket.'

The culprit gulped. He was trying to recover his voice. Shakily he managed to say:

'Aw, lay off me, Donnelly. Have a heart! Can't you see I've got nervous prostration?'

It was Zuleida who rose to the occasion. She was eager to thank the preserver of her existence. Donnelly? It echoed in her memory. She would please him by a tribute in his own tongue. Sweetly, tremulously she exclaimed:

'*Ullo, Donnellee, yo' beeg 'tiff!*'

XXIII

Mr. Stackpole was disturbed by Donnelly's profane report of the sentimental episode, but maintained an outward composure. He said it was a pity that flogging had been abolished in the American Navy many years ago. Seaman Sprague, second class, ought to be lashed to a grating and given a dose of the cat-o'-nine-tails by a boatswain's mate. However, there was no sense in crying over spilled beans, observed the sea-going philosopher. It was better to have Selim Majid show his hand than to be hatching devilment up his sleeve. The Kid's rash adventure with Zuleida would perhaps clear the air of a fog of Oriental deceit and treachery.

True enough, agreed Donnelly, but a ruckus might have been postponed by stringin' this One-Eyed Reilly along until they were closer to Mozambique. The Kid's dam-foolishness had put him in such a wicked temper that there would be no handling him at all. And it was important to shove the dhow for all she was worth while the weather favored. Any delay meant missing out on the scout cruiser, and then what? Deserters! A nasty word!

'Don't waste too much worry on the *Toledo*, Donnelly,' was Mr. Stackpole's advice. 'It may be a question of reaching port at all.'

'Huh? You mean big trouble, sir?'

'If I have this Selim Majid sized up right. Even

William Sprague will have to take it seriously from now on. Can you manage to put the fear of God into him? No more petting parties with Zuleida.'

'I will skin him alive if he bats an eye at her,' said Martin. 'I never did worry beforehand, but this wild Arab skipper has unreasonable signs and symptoms. He is daffy about that girl and then I up and busted him with a wooden bucket. I suppose that was a deadly insult. Seems like I am unlucky, the way I hurt people's feelin's with ebony elephants and things. What is your idea about organizin' ourselves, sir? I'm not anxious to have a knife stuck in my back.'

'If he has any notion like that, Donnelly, he will try to mop up all hands of us. You can't tell what may happen. The lid is off. By thunder, I wish I had left Zuleida alone in the moonlight to paddle her own canoe.'

'Don't say that, Mr. Stackpole. She is awful pretty. When they can't jolly you into dancin' with 'em on the beach, they seduce you into going to sea in a hoodooed dhow with a lunatic skipper. Don't forget that we have two women on our hands to be checked through. Pleasant!'

'Awkward it is,' said the chief pay clerk. 'Quite awkward. In my long experience — well, we must take care of them somehow. Miss Fyffe-Harrison is a wonderful woman. You can count on her through thick and thin. In fact, Donnelly, she increases our complement to four. She would resent being taken care of. How many Arabs and niggers — er — if it comes to an argument?'

'Thirteen,' grunted the machinist's mate. 'The jinx again, and to-morrow sounds like Friday. However and notwithstandin', things were coming pretty fast at us when we ruined the Royal Navy and the Zanzibar police force.'

'Where is that confounded Kid, Donnelly? Don't forget to keep an eye on him.'

'Hiding under the wooden bucket, I guess. He ought to feel plenty small enough.'

Shortly after this interview, Mr. Stackpole limped to Miss Fyffe-Harrison's stateroom and rapped on the door. He was cordially invited to enter. The quarters were cramped, but a seat was found for him upon a small leather trunk. The Englishwoman had been busied at a little folding table which was covered with letters and documents. Mr. Stackpole begged pardon for interrupting her labors with pen and ink. She welcomed him with an air of relief.

Zuleida sat on a stool in a corner, but not in the least like a naughty girl. She smiled delightfully while she polished her nails and powdered her nose. She was still feeling very much pleased with the afternoon's work. Her American lover had been caught at a disadvantage in that violent scene on deck. He would soon take the life of Captain Selim Majid and then all would be well.

Miss Fyffe-Harrison waved a hand at the littered table as she exclaimed:

'Right in the nick of time, Mr. Stackpole. I was about to go looking for you. You are a sort of expert accountant, are you not?'

The chief pay clerk modestly admitted that he could qualify as such. She went on to explain:

'I wonder if you would mind doing me a favor. Figures drive me mad. My affairs happen to be in the hands of a firm of London solicitors who send me statements every now and then. There has been some bothersome litigation. I don't pretend to make head or tail of it. As a matter of fact, I have not tried very hard. They were sending me plenty of cash. And now they afflict me with this ridiculous heap of accounts. Bills, receipts, dividend statements, tax returns, God knows what. They have been accumulating for months, I should say, and finally caught up with me at Mombasa.'

Beatrice lighted another cigarette and crossed her legs with an air of fatigue. Mr. Stackpole had certain other matters on his mind but, as he promptly assured her, he was glad of the chance to take on this extra duty. He would go through the mass of papers carefully, arrange and verify them, and begin the task as soon as possible. Meanwhile, if she would excuse him for changing the subject, there had been an upset in the ship's family. It might have serious consequences. He thought it advisable to talk it over with her.

She listened gravely, breaking into the story only once. Then she seized Zuleida by the shoulders and shook her until the string of amber beads rattled.

'You exasperating little idiot! It would serve you right to turn you over to Selim Majid. I told you to let that silly boy alone.'

Zuleida wept until her guardian threatened to take a stick to her. Returning to Mr. Stackpole, the Englishwoman agreed that the prospect was not so merry and bright. The sailors of the dhow were a hard lot. They had been afraid to turn against her so long as the captain remained faithful. Him she had been able to manage as she had always managed men of subject races, by means of an unbending will and no sign of weakness. Now these bonds appeared to be broken. There might be the very deuce to pay.

'If I know anything about these Arab brutes,' said she, 'Selim Majid is likely to make a fuss. He must feel frightfully provoked. Well, I fancy we ought to be ready for him.'

Unlocking a gun case, she lifted out two sporting rifles.

'Thank the Lord,' exclaimed Mr. Stackpole. 'A thirty-thirty and a heavier one.'

'I bagged a bull elephant with it,' said she.

'And you have an automatic pistol, Miss Fyffe-Harrison?'

'Yes, I am rather glad I didn't pot good old Donnelly with it when he first came on board. He grows on one. Now, my dear man, what do you advise by way of precaution?'

'Well, if trouble breaks, either we hold the fort in these quarters below or we stay on deck and try to drive the rascals down here. We can't afford to run the risk of being mixed up with them as we are now, with Selim Majid and his officers having the run of the cabin. That gives us no show at all.'

'We may have to clear the deck sooner or later,' said she, 'but at present I think we ought to keep them out of the cabin. You can count on me, of course, to help discourage the beggars.'

Night would soon be coming on. It was uncomfortable to wonder what might happen in the dark. Selim Majid was an enemy with a tortuous mind who preferred to plan his purposes in ambush. Such was Cassius Stackpole's theory. He was not expecting an outbreak at once. They held Zuleida as a hostage. His sudden frenzy of anger cooled, Selim would wish no harm to befall her but rather to enjoy her luscious charms and punish her as might seem good to him. She was an object of great value, to be kept unharmed.

If it came to the worst, a siege of several days might be endured in the stoutly timbered cabin. As was the daily custom, two large earthen jars had been filled with fresh water from the barrels in the hold. Miss Fyffe-Harrison had her own stores of canned foods, rice, yams, biscuits, and tea. And she had laid in a special stock of dried beef for George, the lion, until she could find fresh provender for him ashore. Mr. Stackpole made an inventory of these supplies in his thoroughgoing fashion. The rifles were ready for service, with an abundance of ammunition. The Arabs had a few firearms, no doubt, but what they were had to be left to surmise.

'Far be it from me to be a false alarm,' soliloquized the methodical chief pay clerk, 'but this dhow is going to be no place for a pacifist from now on. I

have never met a person who impressed me more unfavorably than this blood-thirsty son of a sea-cook from Muscat. I should enjoy blowing the daylights out of him.'

Word was conveyed to the son of a sea-cook that his passengers wished to reserve the cabin for their exclusive use. It annoyed them to have him and the mate and the boatswain under foot. In bad weather they could find shelter forward or sleep on deck. This amounted to an ultimatum. If not a declaration of war, it was the next thing to it.

'Make him strut his stuff,' was Martin Donnelly's blunt comment. 'Beat him to it with the punch. It is the only way out. Did you take a good look at him when he went on deck? Murder is written all over his map. Of course you will set the watches from midnight on, Mr. Stackpole. We are all bound to feel wide awake till then.'

The subdued young seaman, second class, dared to make himself heard.

'If Miss Fyffe-Harrison has a deck of cards, we might kill time this evening with a little poker game.'

'You muffle your oars, Kid,' rasped Donnelly. 'All I want to hear out of you is complete silence. Your liberty is stopped. Poker? Remember what happened to the last poker game, in the Japanese dump? I am off poker for life.'

Mr. Stackpole nodded in solemn agreement. He felt the same way about chess. To help the hours pass, Miss Fyffe-Harrison offered to read aloud to them from a novel of adventure. She tried the first

chapter on an audience which found it flat, although the tale was brisk and colorful. Smothering a yawn, Donnelly offered sound literary criticism.

'The lad that wrote that means well, ma'am, and he tries hard, but he don't convince me. He never saw and did those things. It sounds like high-class bunk. What he ought to do is sail in a dhow and see life.'

With his hands behind his head William Sprague plaintively crooned:

'Oh, he never cares to wander from his own fireside.
He never cares to wander or to roam.
With his children on his knee,
He's as happy as can be,
And there's no place like home, swee-e-t home.'

Donnelly violently suppressed him when he began whistling, 'Why Did I Kiss That Girl?'

Mr. Stackpole bethought himself of his job as an expert accountant. The time seemed opportune. Later he might be cramped for leisure. The folding table was fetched out of the stateroom and placed beneath a big brass lantern that swayed from a beam in the cabin. Soon the chief pay clerk was absorbed and oblivious of the perils that hovered about them. He knew that Donnelly, pistol in hand, would guard the stairway leading from the deck.

Cassius frowned and shook his head. Beatrice took a seat beside him on the teakwood bench. She could see that her expert was perturbed about something. His pencil traversed columns of figures with uncanny speed. Several sheets were laid aside for

review. On others he made check-marks or notations. Certain documents he studied with a scrutiny frowning and perplexed. The woman began to feel uneasy. Her smile was a little distrait as she said:

'That makes twice you have said "damn," Mr. Stackpole. Is anything wrong?'

'I am afraid so,' was the reluctant answer. 'It looks as if these statements had been purposely muddled and complicated to put you off the track. If there is a nigger in the woodpile, I will do my best to smoke him out.'

'You mean I have been done? How serious is it? I was a fool, I suppose, to pay no more attention to my affairs at home. I dropped out of the world, do you see. It all seemed such rot.'

'On the face of these reports, you have suffered some serious losses,' he candidly told her. 'That may be true. What I don't like is the way the figures seem to be juggled about. To my mind, it is not very cleverly done. They assumed, perhaps, that you were easy to handle — disliking to be bothered with business and marooned way out here in the Indian Ocean.'

For once her masterful courage was shaken. In her eyes was the feminine appeal for help and comfort. This was so unfamiliar that it stirred his emotions. It seemed to break down a wall between them and to create an intimacy that he found exceedingly pleasant. With a sigh she said:

'We may as well get on with it and know the

worst. If I have come a financial cropper, the sooner I find it out the better.'

'It doesn't look very good, Miss Fyffe-Harrison. It will take some time to gather up all these loose ends. You are what they call badly involved, I should say. You can count on me to get to the bottom of it, unless these London agents of yours are too deep.'

He picked up his pencil and began to point out the flaws which his trained intelligence had already detected. They talked in low tones with their heads together over the table. Across the cabin Martin Donnelly was taking his ease on a rug. It was a strategic position where he commanded the stairway. He was alertly mindful of this sentry duty but he also mulled over what he could not help overhearing, enough to give him the drift of affairs at the table. It made him unhappy. Stealing a glance at the clouded faces of the chief pay clerk and the dauntless Englishwoman, he said to himself:

'They don't dislike each other — that's one safe bet. And now more trouble has to come and hit her behind the ear, just to make it more difficult. So help me, I'll throw the Kid's dog overboard tomorrow. The cussed little flea-bitten Jonah! My patience is all wore out.'

XXIV

At midnight William Sprague took the first regular watch. For some time he paced up and down the cabin, but the rocking motion of the dhow made this awkward. And at every right-about his back was turned, for a moment, toward the stairway leading down from the poop deck. His companions were trying to snatch intervals of sleep. It was vital to rest while they could. Miss Fyffe-Harrison had gone to her cot in the stateroom, leaving the door open. William eyed it with some trepidation lest Zuleida might steal out to vamp him. His mood was too stern for that, and he was a chastened seaman, the needle of whose compass once more swung true to the girl in Bridgeport. And there was Donnelly snoring on a rug, a guardian ready to use a club.

The cabin was lighted by two of the brass lamps swinging from overhead. They cast long, uneasy shadows across the polished floor. William refused to be tempted by a low divan. It looked too comfortable for a gob who loved that good old sleep. He pulled a rug over to sit on and rested his back against the divan. Here he could focus his vision on the stairway and forestall any invasion from the deck. He was ready to shoot and give the alarm.

He felt keenly wide awake. A sense of responsibility rode him with spurs. He was holding down a man's job. He felt grateful to Mr. Stackpole for

trusting him after he had made such an awful bust with Zuleida. All he asked was a chance to make good.

An hour passed. It seemed like a week. He moved to the foot of the stairs and listened. There were no sounds on deck to cause uneasiness. He heard Captain Selim Majid shout a hoarse order to the helmsmen. There was the faintly heard hail of a lookout forward, probably singing out in Arabic the immemorial assurance common to all mariners, 'All's well — and the lights are burning bright.' William returned to his post.

Presently one of the cabin lanterns went dim. He reached up and shook it. The oil had burned out. He knew not where to find a supply to replenish it. The other lantern was half full. Therefore he shifted it to another iron hook in the ceiling where it cast its light on the entrance from the deck.

This deepened the shadows in the after spaces of the cabin. There the large room was partly obscured in wavering patches as the single lantern swayed to and fro. The lonely watcher was untroubled so long as the stairway was clearly visible.

The tension relaxed. William's thoughts wandered, as the thoughts of youth will ever wander, blown hither and yon by the winds of fancy. He was not so drowsy as lulled into a sense of repose. Occasionally he started up, nerves tingling at some slight noise, his fingers on the pistol. Then he sat back, his mind roving again. It was difficult to realize that his life might be in danger.

The mongrel pup, Moses Mahomet Ali, slept on the rug at William's feet, arousing whenever he did. It cocked its ears and wrinkled its nose interrogatively or scratched with a crooked hind leg. He wished it to be understood that he was everlastingly on the job, for better or worse. His success in bluffing an African lion had given him a certain swagger. He was a pup with a record.

At length no more than a half hour remained before it would be time to turn the watch over to Donnelly. Nothing had happened. Perhaps they were overplaying it. And yet Selim Majid was an absolutely bad actor, reflected William. You didn't have to tell *him*. He could see that curved sword upraised to split his head like an apple.

He blinked at the cabin stairway or gazed at the swinging lantern which affected him in a curious manner. It was almost like being hypnotized. He tried to keep from looking at it. It made the rest of the cabin seem gloomier. And yet the suspended lantern moved to and fro with such a soothing, rock-a-bye motion that the sentinel's eyes returned to it in spite of him.

The two square windows in the stern of the dhow were open. The heavy shutters had been fastened back to let the cool wind gush into the cabin. The starboard window was almost invisible to William because the lantern flung the black shadow of the stairway into that region of the room.

He failed to discern it when something filled the window space to starboard and blotted out the

stars. The object was, in truth, a man naked but for a dark cloth wound around his middle. His brown body was no more than a blur in the window-frame. He had slid like an acrobat down a rope belayed to the heavy taffrail. Warily he hung suspended while he peered into the cabin. He gripped the rope with one hand. With the other he jerked a knife from the loin cloth and placed it between his teeth.

He could see two men asleep on the floor. The third sat propped against a divan, nodding, with his eyes wandering between the lantern and the stairway. Stupid young pig! Sitting there and waiting for his throat to be cut. This Selim Majid would attend to with skill and dispatch. To leap from the window and flit across the floor as dim and silent as one of those shifting shadows — Selim smiled. It would be no trick at all. In the confusion he might be able to drive his knife into the heart of the big, hairy swine who had dealt him the blow with the wooden bucket. They would be blundering about, pawing for the rifles, while he was swiftly escaping to the deck.

He poised himself upon the window ledge, ready to spring. The thing was shrewdly planned, but, unluckily for Selim Majid, he had overlooked one factor. From the rug at his master's feet, Moses Mahomet Ali flew as though shot out of a gun. The wind had brought him an alien scent. He detested all Arabs. They had pelted him with sticks and stones when he was an orphan in the streets of Zanzibar.

Straight for the window he raced, barking with staccato fury. His nose could not mislead him. For a pup of his dimensions he made an amazing amount of noise.

At the first bark William sat bolt upright, wrenching his absent gaze from the lantern. Prickles chased up and down his spine. Scrambling to his feet, he looked in the direction of the din raised by the scampering Moses Mahomet Ali. He could see something move against the velvet sky in the square frame of the window. It was growing smaller, about to vanish. He raised the pistol, too flurried for careful aim, and took two shots. Then he ran to follow in the wake of Moses Mahomet Ali.

Leaning out of the window, a dangling rope brushed his face. A moment and the rope was snatched upward. It fairly tore through William's hands. The whole fleeting episode was like black magic. The startled youngster pulled in his head and hastily closed the shutters, securing them with an iron bar that hung on a swivel.

By this time Martin Donnelly was up and coming. With a prudent impulse he threw himself flat, for Miss Fyffe-Harrison had emerged from the stateroom and snatched up the elephant gun before Mr. Stackpole could grasp it.

'Cease firing, lady, for the love of Mike,' bawled the machinist's mate. 'No indoor target practice, please!'

He jumped to make the port stern window fast. Mr. Stackpole limped after him, breathlessly demanding to know what it was all about.

'Ask the pup, sir,' responded the Kid whose knees wobbled with excitement. 'He sounded a general alarm and beat it to quarters before I got under way. I thought I saw a guy in the window, but when I tried to plug him, he wasn't there. Spooks are your long suit. S'pose you go talk to this one.'

'Not to-night, William. Once was enough. Selim tried to pay us a call, did he? We overlooked those stern windows. That blessed pup of yours will be recommended for the Navy Cross.'

'He gets a rating right now,' proudly declared William. 'Sea-dog, first class! What did I tell you about that pup? Luck? Moses Mahomet Ali can spell it backward. He saved it up until we really needed it. You ought to apologize to him, Martin. Slippery Selim slings a mean knife and he meant to work fast.'

'You said a wooden bucketful, Kid. The pup has come through. Now you go grab a snooze while I take the watch.'

'The dog takes the watch, you mean, old-timer. Listen, if anybody offered me a million dollars for my Zanzibar bloodhound, I'd give him the nasty sneer.'

XXV

At dawn Mr. Stackpole limped on his crutch to one of the stern windows and opened the shutter. The air in the cabin was insufferably close. He stood enjoying the breeze and the cool of the morning. It was revivifying. Leaning out, he watched the sun wheel gloriously from out of a molten sea. It fascinated him. He was never weary of the eternal miracles of sky and ocean.

Presently, however, he made a discovery that disrupted his innocent contemplations. His wits were turned upside down. His mind was like a scrambled egg. He had to take it for granted that the sun was rising in its accustomed path through the heavens. No room for argument there. Then the course of the dhow must have been changed during the night! She was no longer steering south to make the coastwise port of Mozambique.

Instead of this, her bow had been swung to slant far away from the African mainland.

Mr. Stackpole became aware of something else. The vessel was heeling to starboard instead of rolling easily as when the wind had been more astern. The lofty sail had been trimmed closer aboard in accordance with this change of course. There had been no shift of wind in the night. The northeast monsoon was still strong and fresh. This could be told by the sunrise which defined the east.

The evidence convinced a man who had become acquainted with the rudiments of seafaring during his many cruises. The dhow was now voyaging away from the coast, away from Dar-es Salaam and Mozambique and all the ports between! What was the hidden purpose of Captain Selim Majid?

The chief pay clerk endeavored to map the Indian Ocean in his mind. To the southward of them lay the wide Mozambique Channel between Africa and the enormous island of Madagascar. Apparently the dhow was steering for the northerly coast of Madagascar. It could not be Selim Majid's intention to pass beyond this, into the illimitable and solitary expanse of the Indian Ocean that rolled away to Australia. There was food and water on board to serve less than a fortnight longer. This Mr. Stackpole had already found out.

The nearest stretch of Madagascar coast was so lonely, so unpeopled except by untamed natives that it was unfamiliar even to the French administration which nominally ruled it. Parts of it were as wild as when Captain William Kidd, the flamboyant Captain Avery, and other English pirates of renown, had careened their ships in its harbors or caroused on its beaches.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole felt his stout heart sink. With his passengers disposed of by some bloody means or other, Selim Majid might hide his dhow in some remote inlet, fill his water barrels, obtain supplies from the natives, and sail away to lose himself in the Eastern seas. As far as Miss Beatrice Fyffe-

Harrison and her chartered excursion were concerned, the dhow would be missing with all hands, gone to the bottom in the gale that had swept her away from Zanzibar.

It troubled Mr. Stackpole also when he remembered that he and his two shipmates of *U.S.S. Toledo* had left no clues whatever in their flight from Zanzibar, barring that hurried farewell to Azzan-bin-Hassin in the Sultan's launch. Otherwise their departure from that romantic island had been informal and secretive.

These reflections were not of a kind to inspire a jocund morning spirit. The rising sun was like the handwriting on the wall. A crisis impended and it might not be long delayed. It would be folly to wait inactive in the cabin and let another night overtake them. It would be delivering themselves into Selim Majid's hands for whatever fate his barbaric upheaval of passion might decree. The vital issue was to gain the mastery of the vessel and so thwart this ominous change of course toward Madagascar. This made the cabin untenable as a refuge. They were like so many sheep in a pen. And yet how could so few hope to beat down the crew on deck?

Miss Fyffe-Harrison was preparing breakfast on her spirit stove, with a pot of coffee as black as Selim Majid's heart. Mr. Stackpole broke the news to her nor attempted to break it gently. She preferred to be on the same footing with the rest of them. It was fair to regard her as an able seaman of the armed force. Quite unemotionally she agreed that

they were trapped if they stayed below. She knew something about Madagascar, having visited Tamatave in a French mail boat. The dhow might hide on the northern coast for weeks without seeing a white man, or a gunboat from the naval base at Diego Suarez.

'Right you are,' said she. 'It is now or never. But just how we can get the best of the blighters is a bit too thick for me. I shall have to refer it to the American Navy.'

As the senior officer present, this appeared to be Mr. Stackpole's tough nut to crack. Outwardly calm, his mental machinery had balked. His training had been not at all along these lines. You couldn't figure this out with pencil and paper. The less said about the arithmetic of it, the better. Four against thirteen. What was the answer? And the four contended with odds even heavier than this. How could they contrive to break out of the cabin and escape being cut down one by one in the narrow exit of the companionway?

It required consultation. As Mr. Stackpole listened to the others, their voices seemed faint and far away, so desperately was he wrestling with this riddle of life and death. There *had* to be some way out of it. It was absurd to admit that they could be whipped by circumstances. A silence fell upon the little group. It was more significant than all the wordy argument. They were in the last ditch. And every scheme suggested was thrown aside as futile.

Martin Donnelly had not said very much, de-

ferring to the warrant officer as the leader. However, he was a resourceful machinist's mate whose ingenuity had won praise from several chief engineers. Just now there popped into his head an idea which made him grin. Fantastic it was, but not a bit more so than the earlier incidents of this peculiar liberty party. To the intense surprise of the rest of them he exclaimed in hearty accents:

'Cheerio! Carry on, old top, as we say in the Royal Navy. Listen, Miss F. Harrison, what's in the vessel's hold just forward of your stateroom bulkhead?'

'No cargo, Donnelly,' she promptly replied. 'Stone ballast. On top of that a lot of grass mats, spare canvas, firewood, some wooden crates of curios belonging to me, and three of my boxes.'

'I thank you, ma'am. And is the stuff close to the bulkhead, do you happen to know, or further for'ard?'

'A good deal of it close beyond the wall of my room. Some of it packed against it. I was down there after we left Mombasa. The boatswain lashed my things so they wouldn't tumble about in rough weather. And he piled the mats on top of them in case the hatch leaked.'

Donnelly was immensely pleased. His somber eyes glowed. He waved a large hand at Mr. Stackpole who was about to interrupt with a question.

'One minute, sir. My intellect is steamin' elegant. Don't fool with my pressure, if you please. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I guess we'll have to set fire to this lopsided old excursion boat.'

'The devil we will,' gasped Beatrice, but she would take a sporting chance with good old Donnelly. 'If it is to be suicide, I choose something else. What's in your noddle?'

'Nobody ever called it brains, ma'am. Here is the proposition. If we can put the fire out, we win. If we don't, we lose. Anyhow, we get a run for our money. And that looks better to me than settin' here jammed on a dead center.'

Mr. Stackpole, a brooding listener, looked up to say:

'Give us the specifications, Donnelly. If we are smoked out of the cabin, we shall have to scramble for the deck. And then they finish us off, one by one. But you have the floor. And you are a man of horse sense.'

'There won't be any fire kindled in the cabin, sir. And we can pick our own time to romp out of here. That bulkhead wall of the stateroom is solid plank. It seals these after quarters, cabin and all, from the cargo hold. A hot fire can't eat through timber like that in a hurry.'

'But it is impossible to get into the hold without going on deck,' objected Mr. Stackpole. 'The only entrance is through a hatch.'

The machinist's mate was patient and respectful. It heartened him to have Miss Fyffe-Harrison nod approval, with a quick smile of comprehension. She could think faster than the methodical chief pay clerk who had moved in the rut of routine.

'I don't expect to get into the hold,' carefully explained Martin. 'You have been in the Navy long

enough, sir, to know there's more than one way to skin a cat.'

They were gaining confidence in this practical man from the black gang of the *Toledo*. Mr. Stackpole fervently exhorted him:

'Go to it, Donnelly. It's your move. The rest of us will take orders.'

Miss Fyffe-Harrison said that it bucked her up enormously. Donnelly was perfectly ripping. To her he now turned, but blushed and hesitated before he said:

'I will have to work in your stateroom, ma'am, if you don't mind. If Miss Zuleida is still in bed, you'll have to tell her to show a leg — Good Lord, I mean rise and shine. Get me?'

'I get you,' laughed the Englishwoman. 'Zuleida will rise and shine. What next?'

'Set the girl to tearin' cloth into strips — petticoats — sheets — any kind of cotton stuff. I need a lot of it. What about a heavy knife for me to work with?'

'Hunting knives?' she asked. 'I have two of them, good Sheffield steel, and several native knives that I picked up as souvenirs.'

'Better luck than I hoped for,' said he. 'If I need a hammer I can use the Kid's head.'

This drew fire from William Sprague who spoke bitterly. 'When folks are lookin' death in the eye, you big cheese, I think you might act like a gentleman.'

'Sorry, Kid. You get a written apology when I

have a spare minute to dictate it to my yeoman. Now dump the kerosene from the lantern into a big brass bowl and see if you can find any more of it in the lockers.'

Zuleida emerged from the stateroom as if shaken out by a master-at-arms. She was drowsily powdering her nose and appeared to feel no agitation whatever. She made eyes at William and cooed '*But-oah-yo'-Kid.*' He was coldly unresponsive. Life was too darned serious.

'It won't do, girlie,' said he, severely. 'Trouble and you are twin sisters. You go get you another hero. That's my advice.'

Martin Donnelly knelt in the stateroom and explored the bulkhead wall that extended across the vessel's hull. It was very stout and tight, as he had anticipated. Auger and saw would have made speedy work of it. He was compelled to attack the thick planks with a two-edged hunting knife. Selecting a thin crack where the wood had shrunk a little, he began to whittle carefully. It was a job that could not be hurried.

The wood was old and hard and of a brittle quality. He had to hack at it instead of peeling off clean slivers. He estimated the planking to be at least two inches thick. The knife soon lost its keen edge. He threw it aside for another one. Strong as were his wrists, they began to ache. His shirt was soaked with sweat. After a while he let William Sprague relieve him while he whetted the dulled knives on a rifle barrel.

The Kid lacked the strength and skill of the brawny machinist's mate who handled tools with a kind of artistry. An awkward stroke and the blade of one of the best knives snapped at the hilt. With an oath Donnelly shoved the youngster out of the way. He had found a bit of iron which he muffled with strips of cloth to use as a hammer. With the stateroom door closed, the tap-tap was not likely to arouse suspicion on deck. Donnelly drove the point of a knife through the widening crack and cautiously pounded to hew splinters from the tough wood.

Putting an eye to the crack he could see into the hold. The daylight streamed down from an open hatch. This eased his mind by a little. He had been lucky enough to avoid the stuff that was piled against the bulkhead. But he was unable to discover just where the grass mats, crates, etc., were stowed. Unless they were directly underneath or quite close to the spot where he was working, the forlorn hope might flicker out. It was all a blind hazard.

The native blades were poor stuff. One of them bent like soft iron as he put too much muscle into a downward stroke. And yet he refused to admit that there was such a thing as defeat. He was a stubborn man. In dogged silence he hewed and whittled to enlarge the ragged hole sufficiently to meet his purpose. The others waited and kept a grip on themselves. Zuleida combed and braided her lustrous hair with the aid of a little mirror. Kis-

met! It was the will of Allah, whatever happened.

From the deck came the guttural, rasping roar of a half-grown lion goaded to anger. The noise diminished to a snarl and swelled again. Beatrice dropped the garment which she was tearing into strips and exclaimed in great distress:

'Poor old George! Nothing to eat and nobody to love him! But hunger would never make him swear like that. I'm sure Selim Majid is tormenting him. The unspeakable rotter! I told him I'd shoot him if I caught him at it again.'

'He enjoys harrowing your feelings, as well as the lion's,' said Cassius Stackpole.

'By Jove, I'll make him pay for it,' she cried. 'Remember, now, I am to have the first shot at him.'

'Your meat, ma'am,' chuckled Donnelly as he stood up to stretch his weary frame. 'Ladies first! And if you ask me, I should call this Selim Majid a bum risk for a life insurance agent.'

The toiler looked ruefully at his blistered hands and the dull, nicked knives. The opening he had managed to cut was perhaps a foot long and four inches wide. He could do no more with his ineffective tools. Tensely they awaited his instructions.

'I hoped to make it big enough to poke my head through,' he told them, 'so I could take a look-see. But it can't be done. Lady Luck is our only friend from now on.'

'Here is one young gob that's perfectly willing to say his prayers and not ashamed of it,' confessed William Sprague.

With a maternal impulse the woman's fingers caressed the lad's smooth, tanned cheek. Then Donnelly let her bind his smarting palms with soft rags. Now he ordered them to roll the strips of cloth into balls no larger than could be squeezed through the hole in the bulkhead wall. William had unearthed a can of kerosene in a locker, also a jug of olive oil. These were precious assets.

Donnelly dumped the two ingredients into a bowl and stirred the mixture. In it he soaked the balls of cotton cloth until they were saturated. They absorbed the inflammable fluid like so much wicking. They were sure to burn for some time. Donnelly felt pleased with his handiwork. A man who seldom betrayed his feelings, his fingers trembled a little as he dropped the dripping fire-balls, one by one, into a bucket to carry them into the stateroom.

Miss Fyffe-Harrison gave him the cleaning rod of a rifle. With this as a skewer he held one of the balls ready to light. The Kid scratched a match. The ball ignited with a gush of red flame and black smoke. Donnelly rammed it through the bulkhead and withdrew the cleaning rod.

'One down,' said he. 'Set 'em up again, boys.'

Another burning ball of cotton was shoved through the narrow aperture and then another. Donnelly counted those left in the bucket. Half a dozen more. And every one of them might fall upon the stone ballast in the bottom of the hold and fail to set fire to the combustible stuff. Perhaps he, too, said a wordless prayer. The last fire-ball flared at

the end of the cleaning rod and was crowded through to drop unseen. The stateroom was foul with kerosene smoke. Coughing, half-blinded, they retreated to the cabin where Mr. Stackpole had been keeping watch against surprise from the deck.

'Any results, or is it too soon to find out?' he inquired.

'I'll go back in a minute,' spluttered Donnelly, wiping his face.

'We ought to be ready to make our exit in style,' said the doughty chief pay clerk, ready to reassume the command. The prospect of an old-fashioned boarding-party was enough to make him quake, but for the honor of the service, he could not afford to play the laggard.

William was casting sour glances at the wistful Zuleida. She would probably be wished on him to be taken care of and kept out of danger. A doll like that would be perfectly useless in a scrap. One of those pampered Oriental parasites, he reflected, who lived to be petted and to muss things up for all hands.

This the beautiful parasite proceeded to disprove with an energy that was startling. There was nothing languorous in the swiftness with which she bounded from a divan and snatched up a wicked Somali knife, long and slender, with an ivory handle. Her crimson lips were drawn back from the dazzling teeth. She ran a thumb along the blade. It was sharp enough to suit her. She ran to Mr. Stackpole. He was the chief of this fighting band. She was ready to obey him.

'Whew, I guessed wrong,' muttered William. 'Look what might have happened to me if I *hadn't* tried to kiss her.'

Donnelly had gone back into the stateroom, a wet towel wrapped around his head. The black, greasy smoke of the fire-balls was clearing from the room. Wisps of grayish vapor had begun to draw through the hole in the bulkhead wall. Donnelly stood listening. Small, crackling noises came to his ears. The planks felt hot to the touch. He smelled burning wood, the acrid odor of charred canvas, the peculiar tang of dried grass alight. The random fire-balls had found their target.

Out into the cabin he bolted, slamming the door behind him. His first words told them that the time had come.

'We're off! The smoke must be pourin' up through the hatch and deck seams. Hark! Listen to that! Selim Majid has mustered his crew amidships to fight the fire. That pulls 'em away from aft and gives us a chance to break out and hold the fort. The trick worked!'

They could hear the shouts of alarm, the patter of bare feet, the strident voice of Captain Selim Majid as he deserted his station on the poop and ran toward the smoking hatch. In the cabin they were pitifully few, but all their souls were valiant. Miss Fyffe-Harrison had chosen the lighter rifle. Donnelly picked up the elephant gun. This left the pistol for Seaman Sprague. Mr. Stackpole, sadly hampered by his crutch, hoped to find a weapon of some kind on deck.

William Sprague begged them to wait a minute while he galloped to salvage little Moses Mahomet Ali who had been tied in a corner to keep him away from the smoke. The Kid tucked the pup under one arm.

'Now fly to it, you dead game sport. Here is one time you get a bellyful.'

'Come along, son,' said Mr. Stackpole. 'Let's go.'

XXVI

STRATEGY desperate and forlorn! The devil or the deep sea!

Two black men tended the tiller on the high poop, or quarterdeck, of the burning dhow. They had been suddenly left alone. All their shipmates had rushed pell-mell to the open hatch from which the smoke was rising. Fire at sea was greatly to be dreaded in such a vessel as this. The two helmsmen were terrified, but they faithfully continued to steer by the compass because Captain Selim Majid had told them to stay where they were.

However, they yelled and rolled their eyes when the infidel passengers, armed and ferocious, came tumbling out of the cabin companionway. A bullet nicked the shoulder of one of these astonished negroes. He whimpered and scuttled forward to find shelter. The other one flung up his arms and toppled across the tiller which dragged him to and fro. He was definitely dead.

Now the dhow was an awkward craft to steer and carried a weather helm, as they say. With the tiller abandoned she fell off from the wind instead of rounding into it and riding hove to as a well-behaved vessel should do. The huge lateen sail thrashed wildly and then gybed over with destructive violence. The sheet blocks banged the deck with re-

ports like cannon. The short mast was too stout to be pulled out by the roots, but the slender yard supporting the sail could not withstand this racking strain. It cracked and collapsed. The canvas dropped in bulging folds and trailed overside. The dhow was like a sea bird with a broken wing, rolling in the trough of the waves.

No heed was paid this serious disaster. Other matters were far more urgent. From the raised deck far aft, Mr. Stackpole's party caught a glimpse of Captain Selim Majid. Flourishing a long-barreled pistol, he had been endeavoring to drive a few of his men down into the murky hold to fight the fire at close quarters. He had felled one with the butt of the pistol to encourage the others. Two or three were dragging a canvas hose. The boatswain and a seaman swayed at the handles of a clumsy wooden pump in front of the forecastle.

Selim Majid desisted to glare toward the stern. He heard the shots and knew that all was not well with his helmsmen who had permitted the vessel to run wild. He perceived that he was caught between two fires. The Christians had outwitted him. They would have to be disposed of before any more effort was made to save the dhow from burning to the water's edge. He cried out loudly to his men. This new alarm bewildered them. They were very near to panic. The burly Arab mate ran to gather up the firearms which had been dropped on deck. Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison neatly stopped him with a ball through the thigh. It was a highly creditable snap-

shot. Rolling over and over, he sat up to stanch the wound.

Selim Majid, a wolf at bay, knelt to rest an elbow upon his knee while he fired the heavy pistol. The bullet whisked Mr. Stackpole's white cap from his head and grazed the bald scalp. He was both pained and surprised to find that an Arab could shoot with such deliberate accuracy as this. He tore a sleeve from his shirt and made a rough bandage of it. He called it a minor casualty.

Martin Donnelly pulled the trigger of the elephant gun, with Selim Majid as his mark. He missed. The lathy, agile skipper was sprinting to take cover behind the mast.

A leisurely engagement of this kind was not in the least what the Christian refugees desired. The fire in the hold was gaining rapid headway. Unless they could rally to check it, the vessel was doomed. This was uppermost in Mr. Stackpole's mind as he briskly exclaimed:

'Most of those niggers are demoralized, boys. We'll have to wade into it.'

'Before they can turn loose on us with their guns,' agreed Donnelly. 'First we'll throw the lead into 'em for all we are worth. Fire by salvos, Miss F. Harrison, understand? Give 'em everything we got. After that you stand back with the ladies, Mr. Stackpole. The Kid and me will prance in.'

'I guess I can pick up a musket or something,' said the chief pay clerk. 'I did pretty well in the Japanese garden.'

Their two magazine rifles and the automatic pistol swept the deck in a drumming fusillade. They smothered retaliation. Of the enemy, those who had found nothing to hide behind were running like mad to the bows of the vessel where there was a forecastle into which they could tumble. Two failed to reach it and lay huddled where they dropped. The Englishwoman was shooting up to form. The frantic survivors found the forecastle full of smoke that drove them choking out again. Angry bullets were searching for them and they dived below like acrobats. As a continuous performance, it was odd to see.

Donnelly strode along the poop and leaped to the main deck. As a club, his two hands gripped the heated barrel of the elephant gun. He swung it with ease. It was a feat beyond the strength of an ordinary man to swing this heavy weapon as if it were no more than a malacca cane. He had stripped to the waist, in the style of the old Navy.

At his heels was Seaman William Sprague, green youngster on his first cruise. If he was frightened, the air of boyish bravado covered it. The round white hat was jauntily cocked over one eye. The pistol was in his fist.

'Leave me a couple of niggers, Martin. That's a good guy,' said he.

The Englishwoman followed them with her rifle ready, hoping to keep busy around the edges of the mêlée. Zuleida refused to remain behind. Unveiled, her round white arms bared, black eyes flashing, she

clutched that long, thin knife with the ivory hilt and swore viciously at Mr. Stackpole when he tried to detain her. If unable to slay Selim Majid with her own hands, she would see that the wounded gave no more trouble.

The nearest man to stand his ground was a long, muscular Arab armed with a sword. He slashed Donnelly's cheek an instant before he was clubbed to the deck. The sailors who had been smoked out of the forecastle now thought it better to risk death in the open, and so they came surging along to reinforce Selim Majid. William Sprague fired into the thick of them while Donnelly shouted:

'Steady, Kid! Bring home the bacon! *Wallah, Wallah, Wallah!*'

They were by now forward of the open hatch from which the smoke billowed in increasing volume. It was like fighting in a fog. The smoke was an ambush for Selim Majid who had been crouching behind the mast where the boatswain had joined him. They were about to dash into the scrimmage when there came an extraordinary interruption.

Overlooked and forgotten was the African lion in the wooden cage covered with matting. The smoke had drifted to annoy and frighten him. As it became thicker and hotter, the instinctive dread of fire aroused him to frenzy. Sparks were whirling into the cage. He threw himself against the rusty bars, biting and clawing them. For the first time his full strength was unleashed.

The iron bars buckled but could not be forced

from their sockets in the heavy timbers. Rebounding from them, George hurled his weight against one end of the cage. In it was a plank door with a bar to secure it on the outside. The door had seemed stout enough for its purpose. Now, however, it creaked and sagged. The fastenings were ripping out. Again the lion crashed against the door. It swung out and toppled to the deck, torn from its hinges.

Out leaped the tortured George, his only intention to flee from the smoke and sparks. Sneezing, coughing, he stared stupidly at the sea, tufted tail lashing his tawny flanks.

It was a diversion that suddenly halted hostilities. A curious sight it was to see the oncoming sailors of the dhow stop dead in their tracks, anxious to give George a wide berth. Donnelly grinned and shouted to William:

'George has these cuckoos stopped. Make it snappy and we can drive 'em plumb into the fo'c'sle.'

It was the turn of the tide. The rush had been checked. Donnelly advanced, swinging the elephant gun as a terrible cudgel. The Kid yelled a warning. Selim Majid and the boatswain were charging through the smoke to take them on the flank. Donnelly turned to face the peril, suddenly changed his mind, and retreated aft, dragging William by the arm.

'What's the matter, Martin? Did he plug you with his pistol?'

'Look yonder, Kid. We'll wait. Let George do it.'

The lion had stiffened like a figure of bronze. His head was lowered. He was the great jungle cat stalking its prey. The yellow eyes, implacably hostile, saw Selim Majid and nothing else. For the moment the Arab shipmaster was as still as the lion that hunted him. It was a private feud that had thrust the affray to one side. The others looked on, their weapons idle. It was as though some spell had been cast over the warring vessel with the flames raging in her hold.

The lion moved forward with muscles rippling beneath the smooth hide, one stealthy step, then another. His belly almost touched the deck. The wicked claws were unsheathed. The white fangs glistened between the slavering jaws. The lion was preparing to make its kill.

Selim Majid moved backward, one slow step, then another. He was like a man in a trance who had been deprived of volition. He leveled the long pistol and fired. The lion continued its slow, sinuous march, closer and closer to its victim. It was not yet ready to spring. Selim Majid raised the pistol again. The hammer clicked. There was no report. Step by step the Arab retreated, discarding the useless pistol for a dagger.

The lion's body tautened for the leap. At this very instant Captain Selim Majid was seen to totter, throwing up his arms in a wild gesture. His heel had struck the coaming of the hatch out of which the clouds of smoke were pouring. The wind blew them aside so that he could be seen quite clearly. He

reeled and clawed the air. Then he disappeared, plunging downward into the hold. A dozen feet down and falling head-foremost to pitch upon the stone ballast in the bottom of the flaming cavern!

The baffled lion was unable to account for this phenomenon. With a growl he walked to the hatch, shook his head, rubbed a paw across his smarting eyes and turned to gallop away from the smoke. Glaring this way and that he espied the boatswain who had nimbly climbed to the head of the stumpy mast. Another Arab foe! George resumed his slinking crouch and went weaving toward the mast. Roaring his wrath at being unable to ascend this smooth, round tree, he reared and tore splinters from it with his powerful claws.

The fugitive boatswain had been willing to let the lion eat Captain Selim Majid. At least, he had declined to expend precious pistol cartridges in trying to save him. Now, however, he was vitally concerned about himself. Clinging to the mast with one hand, he fired at the lion which was directly beneath him. It was an excellent shot. With a bullet hole in his broad chest, George slowly relaxed and stretched himself on the deck.

A mighty, convulsive struggle and he regained his feet. Grandly he stood as though unhurt. He gazed about him. Then very slowly he began to walk aft, but no longer with the quivering intensity of the jungle cat stalking its prey. His gait was uncertain. The Englishwoman ran to meet him. Good old George! He knew where to find a friend. His

superb vitality had almost ebbed. The yellow eyes were dimmed. Presently he staggered, laid down and tried to lick the blood from a supine paw.

His mistress slumped to the deck beside him and lifted the shaggy head to place it in her lap. Fondly she stroked the black muzzle and heavy neck. In this manner died the lion of Mombasa. The woman's eyes were wet as she exclaimed:

'He was the dearest pet I ever had.'

'A grand finish,' consoled Donnelly. 'Killed in the line of duty. Now we'll have to go on with the show. Hey, Kid, go get that buzzard of a bo's'n that George treed. If he refuses to throw away his gun, drill him.'

With Selim Majid so uncannily erased in smoke and flame, his sailors huddled together with no zest for combat. There was no leader among them. And when the prodigious Donnelly advanced to flail them down, they broke and scurried for the bows of the vessel. The boatswain surrendered to William's persuasive automatic and was promptly kicked forward to join the men.

'Now, Kid, hold 'em there,' ordered Martin. 'I'll go frisk all hands for weapons and then you make 'em stay put. Penned up pretty!'

A few minutes and the machinist's mate was able to return to his own friends. Beatrice bandaged the slash on his cheek while he went on to say:

'Not a yelp out of One-Eyed Reilly since he tipped himself down the hatch. Stunned or broke his neck when he lit and the smoke finished him

pronto. Hell surely did yawn for that guy and he flew right smack into it. Now, folks, we've got a burnin' ship on our hands. If we can't get it under control, we are out of luck.'

XXVII

THE fire had gained far too much headway. They had hoped to make quicker work of the sally on deck and then to stamp out the blaze before it ate into the structure of the vessel. They had extravagantly challenged the odds stacked high against them. The factor of time had whipped them. They turned to at the salt-water pump, but the pressure soon burst the rotten canvas hose. It leaked in a dozen places. No use setting the captive sailors at work with buckets and water jars.

'I doubt if we could douse it with plenty of good hose and a steam pump,' sighed Donnelly.

'Well, I have given up all idea of catching the *Toledo* at Mozambique,' Mr. Stackpole admitted. 'And even if we could put the fire out, I doubt if we could sail the dhow very far with a broken mainyard and a crew of mutinous niggers. This seems to be the worst predicament yet.'

'It is all of that, old dear,' agreed Miss Fyffe-Harrison. 'And precious little chance of sighting a sail between now and night.'

In silence they filed aft to the poop deck, their last refuge. Here they could breathe air that refreshed them. Donnelly had delayed to run and fetch William Sprague before he should be cut off from his comrades by a barrier of fire.

The sailors could be left to themselves, up in the

bow, isolated, condemned to perish with the rest of this forlorn ship's company. The only boat was the dug-out canoe lashed upon the cabin roof. Five castaways and a small dog named Moses Mahomet Ali might take refuge in it if the water were smooth, but they could never stay afloat in the frothing swells that ran before the northeast monsoon. It was merely another way of drowning. And, besides, there was neither fresh water nor food.

Although Mr. Stackpole was unaware of it, his stolid composure comforted his friends in this overwhelming misfortune. He faced death with the dignity of a Socrates about to drink the hemlock. The presence of a woman whom he greatly admired may have had something to do with it.

The refugees had retreated as far aft as possible. Amidships the dhow was a pillar of smoke shot with streaks of crimson. Slowly, stubbornly the flames ate into the heavy frames and planking. The wind whirled the smoke and sparks to leeward of the dismasted hulk and so made it possible to live and breathe on the poop deck and also far forward where the Arab sailors were marooned. This was merely a reprieve, a mockery of salvation.

Cassius Stackpole steadied himself against the rudder head, the crutch under his arm. The Englishwoman stood close beside him. Her hand was clasped in his. It was a symbol of something that she could not bring herself to say in words. Life had been stripped to its essential elements, purified of all its rubbish. In his honest soul was raging rebel-

lion that, after taking one trick after another in this game with destiny, the cards had finally been dealt against them.

Martin Donnelly, battered, grimy, and blood-stained, sat with his head in his hands. He was disgusted. This was the paramount emotion. Setting the dhow on fire had been his bright idea, he reflected, and now look at the jam they were in. If they could have worked faster after breaking out of the cabin — if George, the lion, hadn't insisted on putting on a show of his own — if the canvas hose hadn't been rotten — well, what was the use of whimpering? They would probably hang on a little longer and then take to the canoe — not that it mattered much — they were scuppered either way — but nobody felt like staying to roast with the late Selim Majid. This was the human nature of it — to kid yourself along — Martin recalled the boat from a torpedoed British tramp that his destroyer had picked up in the wintry Bay of Biscay — all hands dead of exposure and hunger — poor devils, they had kidded themselves into believing, no doubt, that while there was life there was hope.

Such were Donnelly's thoughts, but he kept them to himself. He sighed unselfishly when from beneath his black brows he glanced at his companions. There was Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison — she was just getting where she could appreciate the merits of Old Man Stackpole. And flighty Kid Sprague, manfully trying to console Zuleida, poor child, who had forgotten all about ensnaring him. The brood-

ing Donnelly was a man of few affections and attachments. The naval service owned him body and soul. And if he were due to pass out, it seemed to be in the line of duty. They might list him as a deserter, but he knew better.

Now, in the last extremity, it was Cassius Stackpole who heard the quick whisper of inspiration. It made his pulse pound. The blood surged into his face. Was the idea grotesque, impossible? There was an imploring note in his voice as he said:

'Listen to this, Donnelly. You figured that the Sultan's launch would stay afloat after you smashed it with the water cask, remember? If we can scuttle this dhow and put the fire out, will she float or founder?'

Donnelly was startled out of his stupor.

'This outfit is strong on tryin' anything once, sir. The dhow rides light, no cargo and no great amount of ballast. There is an awful lot of timber in a hull like this. If she stays awash we can roost on top of the cabin and rig a bit of awning. That would be no tea party for the ladies, but not so unpleasant as this here barbecue. I guess you have started something.'

Beatrice nodded approval, adding by way of emphasis: 'Quite right, Donnelly. Just now we can't afford to be too particular, can we?'

The machinist's mate was perplexed and showed it. Mr. Stackpole's inspiration seemed extremely difficult to put into effect. To scuttle the dhow was far easier said than done. How was a man to get at

her underneath the water-line without being smoked to death or roasted? And what could he cut a hole with? Not with those nicked, broken hunting-knives.

'I am plenty sore enough to bite a hole in the bottom of this hoodooed old barge,' said he, 'but how can I stay below anywhere?'

This stumped Cassius Stackpole whose elation was overcast by chagrin. However, he had one valuable contribution to offer.

'When you were in the thick of the shindy, Donnelly, I saw one of the sailors flourish an axe. This was when they made a rush out of the forecastle — just before Selim Majid — er — left us. The axe was dropped on deck, I am quite sure, when they scampered back.'

Donnelly's energy returned to meet this new demand. Smoke was now sifting through the cracks of the cabin roof. He slid the hatch back a few inches. Smoke rolled up and drove him away. There was no descending the stairs. It was impossible to go below in the after part of the vessel. Refusing to be whipped, he stood gazing toward the bow. One chance remained, but how could he pass through the barrier of fire amidships that roared like a furnace? Sparks had ignited the folds of the sail. The tarred rigging flared like a torch.

'Come along, Kid,' huskily spoke Martin.

'Come along where? For Heaven's sake, you smoke-eater, do you expect me to head straight into the fire?'

'And I thought you had begun to show signs of human intelligence, William. How did you ever get past a recruitin' officer?'

By the back of the neck he shoved the obtuse young seaman toward the dug-out canoe upon the cabin roof. The others laid hold and helped to drag it to the bulwark. Over it splashed. William jumped into it, detaching himself from the embraces of Zuleida who felt tearfully convinced that she was never to see him again. Donnelly embarked more awkwardly. They paddled along the windward side of the vessel until the canoe floated under the bow. The Kid held fast, with the pistol ready, but there was no need of intimidating the Arab sailors. They were abject and harmless.

Donnelly hoisted himself amongst them with a jump and a swing. He felt not the slightest fear of them. They moved aside before he trampled over them. He groped a little way along the deck and was fortunate enough to find the axe where it had been thrown away. What he had in mind, as the last chance, was the small hatch covering the fore-peak where the cable was stowed, right in the bows. He kicked it open.

The air gushed out terrifically hot, but the smoke was not dense enough to frighten him from the task in hand. A man toughened by a hundred and fifty degrees in a cruiser's fireroom might stick it out for a few minutes, with the hatch open directly above his head and the forepeak no more than a shallow cubby-hole.

Around his waist he tied a rope's end and told the wondering sailors, by gestures, to haul him out when he yelled. His heart was sick with the dread that he might be unable to hew through the planks before his strength should leave him. But he guessed that the butts of the planks were fastened to the stem with wooden pegs and it might be possible to start them.

Crouching in the confined space, he hammered the butts with savage blows. These planks were spongy with decay. The axe sank into them. They began to loosen from the stem timber. Water gurgled in, rivulets that splashed on Donnelly's legs. And still he wielded the axe, smashing blows sent home in blind fury. The inrush of water was like a torrent. He lifted up a wheezing cry for deliverance. The black sailors tugged at the rope. This mighty feat wrought in the forepeak might save them as well as the unconquerable infidels. It was the truce of God!

Into the waiting canoe lurched Donnelly and sprawled his length. William paddled back to the stern of the dhow.

'Leave me be, Kid,' muttered Martin. 'I don't feel like climbin' aboard just yet. Make the boat fast and let it ride. I am due to go off watch for a spell and sort of ease up. I've served in some hard ships but they never worked a man like this one.'

It was not long before the vessel began to feel the weight of water that spouted and flowed into the hold. The bow dropped perceptibly lower. The poop deck canted a little. She responded more slug-

gishly to the cradling impulses of the seas. The silent watchers saw the sable curtain of smoke grow thinner and paler as the steam mingled with it from the hissing hold.

Lower and lower sank the dying dhow. She settled until the waves were lipping the main deck. A little more and they were racing across it in frolic play. When the water filled the after part, the bow lifted so that the vessel rode on an evener keel. This saved Selim Majid's sailors from being washed away. They clung like barnacles, now submerged, now visible, in their own grim and tenacious conflict for survival.

The fire was almost quenched. Below decks it had sullenly subsided like a huge, steaming caldron. The waves breaking across the deck extinguished the flames that had spread to the upper-works. The tall poop, rising like the pattern of an ancient galleon, was a tiny island. It remained above the surface in the manner of a bit of reef. Martin Donnelly, hauling himself aboard from the canoe, surveyed the scene with melancholy interest.

'Well, Mr. Stackpole, I wish to report the ship scuttled, as ordered. If she had made up her mind to go plunk to the bottom, she would be on her way by now. This yachtin' party sure does die hard.'

XXVIII

SHOWING neither smoke nor sail to signal its precarious existence to any distant ship that might pass that way, the waterlogged dhow was the merest speck on the brilliant expanse of the Indian Ocean. It wallowed tragic and inert. That it struggled, even so feebly as this, to escape obliteration was because the wind and sea were in a gracious mood. The caprice of a squall might pluck the castaways from their refuge and stamp the charred wreck under. Through the long, long hours of the afternoon they scanned the face of the waters. Thirst afflicted them. It was already intolerable after their ordeal by fire.

Seaman Sprague bravely attempted to explore the cabin. Floundering to the waist, he had to extricate himself from the floating débris, embers, chests and lockers half-consumed, rugs, and what not. Gaseous fumes and vapors that still lingered made him dizzy. When the vessel rolled, the water piled clamorously from one side of the cabin to the other, carrying all this floating stuff with it. However, William managed to fish out six oranges and a cocoanut. It was treasure-trove. He would have made a second trip but Donnelly forbade it.

'Let it alone, Kid,' he growled. 'You are too doggoned tired. You are liable to get knocked off your feet and can't get up. I may take a flyer at it after a

while. I'm tired, too. Funny! I don't seem to be the man I was.'

Stretched on deck, the weary machinist's mate intended to pull himself together and turn to. Drowsily he wondered about various things — what the gang in the *Toledo* had to say about his jumping ship — the twelve dollars he owed Jimmie, the commissary steward, from the last crap game — what a shame it was that two women had to take their punishment in this bum deal — if God was a square sport, why didn't He do something about it?

In the midst of his meditations Martin fell very soundly asleep. It was slumber as deep as a well. Until into the night he lay like a log and his comrades had not the heart to disturb him. When he awoke from troubled dreams, the moon was sailing in the sky, gorgeous and serene. He chuckled to himself as he lazily stared at this silver tropical moon. Well, there had been some good laughs in it when a man came to think it over. The ebony elephant, the Bu-bu-bu Express, the phantom lady! And you couldn't find a better pair of buddies than Mr. Stackpole and the Kid. They had stood the gaff and neither of them was used to the rough stuff. They were there!

Donnelly raised himself upon an elbow. His sense of humor was stirred anew, and with it a feeling of benignant and romantic interest. Two and two, his four companions had drawn apart upon the cabin roof. Close together sat Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison and Mr. Cassius Stackpole. Closer to-

gether sat William Sprague and Zuleida. It was all right for misery to love company, pensively murmured the observer, but it made him feel lonesome. And yet there was entertainment in it. William couldn't be expected to ignore the pearl of the harem in a plight like this. No harm could come of it now. The damage had been done. The ghost of Selim Majid could afford to laugh. Vengeance could have been no more cunningly contrived.

William's arm was around Zuleida's waist while he talked in soothing accents. It really made no difference that she couldn't understand what he said. Anything was better than waiting and hoping in silence.

'Girlie, the kiss that we didn't get that time turned out to be mighty expensive. We may as well have it now, and repeat. It won't do a bit of good for us to wish we hadn't been so rash. You can't help those things. They just happen, specially if you belong to the well-known younger generation. That's us. It's a long walk to Dar-es Salaam and your old folks at home, but we'll put you there somehow. The Navy isn't going to let itself get thrown by a little thing like this. First thing you know, a ship will come breezin' along and snatch us out of this. Of course it will. My, but you are the red-hot mamma in this moonlight! No wonder Mr. Stackpole forgot how old he was when you floated out of the haunted palace. And Selim Majid saw something with his one good eye before he got bumped off, I'll announce to the Indian Ocean.'

Martin Donnelly listened to this nonsense and called it 'apple sauce,' but he felt the fonder of William for it. The boy was not thinking of himself. And, after all, it was the way you finished that really mattered.

The other shipwrecked couple compelled the more serious attention of the musing Donnelly. The bobbed hair of Miss Fyffe-Harrison nestled against Mr. Stackpole's substantial shoulder. Their voices were lowered to a confidential key. Donnelly heard enough to confirm his own surmises. They had made an important discovery. They needed each other. Mercifully they were able to forget the present in evoking the future. They would call it blessed if they should be permitted to work it out together, two confirmed wanderers who now desired safe anchorage in a quiet harbor. He would resign from the service — a man of his training and experience could make a new career for himself. First he would go to England and see what could be done to salvage her affairs.

'And she wiped her feet on him because he was a warrant officer,' thought Donnelly. 'What does that amount to outside the service? He don't want to stay in as a chief pay clerk. This will put ambition in him. A heap of nonsense has been knocked out of that woman's head — losin' her money and a lively cruise with the U. S. Navy. There they are — all set to live happy ever afterwards, and what's left of this condemned dhow is liable to drop out from under us any minute. We are all like that. Here I

am, tryin' to figure out how I can square myself for desertion and keep out of the naval prison in Portsmouth. I dunno but what life is foolish like that, all the time. Plan and worry and fuss about to-morrow and, like as not, Captain Death knocks you for a goal — and it's good-night.'

Some time later the fragment of gently rolling deck became hushed but for the pitiful whining of a little dog that was very thirsty and hungry and failed to understand why his devoted master was so neglectful. Martin Donnelly, refreshed by his long sleep, sat hunched in habitual vigilance. By chance he noticed a star which hung so close to the horizon that he looked at it again. He fancied that it grew brighter. He waited before arousing his comrades. Nervously he licked his cracked lips and rubbed his smarting eyes with the back of his hand.

Could this be a distant steamer's masthead light? What else would it be? He shook William Sprague by the shoulder. The boy had the vision of a good gun-pointer.

'Snap out of it, Kid,' he whispered. 'Don't wake the ladies quite yet. A false alarm would be cruel. What's that yonder?'

'A steamer coming up fast,' promptly answered William. 'That little wink of green is her starboard side-light. Heading this way to pass close aboard, or I'm a liar. Sure! I caught her red port light just then.'

'My eyes are on the blink — too much smoke,' said Martin. 'Don't you go and make a mistake, Kid.'

Mr. Stackpole joined them. Alas, they had no light of their own to flash, not even a dry match among them to try to kindle a flare. And the wreck was no more than a shadowy patch on the moonlit sea. But they were supremely hopeful. The steamer's side-lights glowed like colored jewels as she drew nearer. This meant that her course was laid almost straight to steer for the dhow that drifted submerged.

The two women were awakened. In these poignant moments of suspense, they clung to each other like a mother and daughter. That the steamer should be approaching as though guided to the spot seemed supernatural. It was an interposition. Thus they stood and waited.

If this seemed incredible, what was there to say when the steamer swept past, no more than a few hundred yards away? There came no signal from her bridge nor did the engines slow their steady beat. Lights gleamed from the round ports of cabin and saloon. They were eloquent of comfort and safety. Was it possible that the officers had failed to perceive the people clustered aft on the wreck of the dhow, and the Arab sailors huddled on the wave-washed bow? Were their shrill, wailing cries unheard?

Only a derelict fragment of a small sailing vessel and fortunately a bright night in which to pass clear of it. It was worth no more than a glance. And yet it might have been that the passenger steamer preferred not to bother with taking off the crew of this

negligible native craft. The sea has its tales of man's inhumanity to man, and some of them are very sordid.

'A mail-boat — to Madagascar or somewhere beyond,' exclaimed Martin Donnelly, smothering black curses. 'I hope the next typhoon sinks her with all hands. What do you think of it, Mr. Stackpole?'

'A slack watch, perhaps. They get that way in the tropics. But I can't understand it — I can't understand —'

What stunned him like a blow, as it did the others, was the enormous irony of it, as though God were laughing at them. It made them feel that hope was a mocking illusion, a mirage. If this chance of life had been inscrutably snatched from their grasp, why expect anything more? With a laugh that had no mirth in it, Martin Donnelly translated their thoughts in his own way.

'Can't understand it? Well, I can. It's the jinx.'

XXIX

Not long after the break of day, their weary eyes descried a wisp of cloud that hovered on the ocean rim. The sunrise dyed it like a rose petal. Then it gleamed white. To one castaway and then another it occurred that this might be a fleck of sail. But disappointment was too recent and benumbing to permit the resurgence of hope. It had made fatalists of them. They were like Moslems. Their time had come. It was willed that they should perish. They had fought the good fight, but ultimate defeat was written on the tablets of fate.

Even Seaman William Sprague had to admit that it was not so good. He took the trouble to assure Zuleida that things always looked worst just before they were due to break right, but the sound of his own voice failed to convince him. The girl uttered no complaints. In her blood was the strain of an ancestry which had learned to endure peril and hunger and thirst. Youth also was her asset.

The keen-eyed William watched that gleaming bit of cloud a full hour before venturing an opinion. The breeze was lighter than on the day before, and the sea calmer. A vessel under sail coming up from the south would make slow work of beating to windward. For this reason it was difficult to say whether the glistening speck was a rag of cloud or a spread of

canvas. It did resemble a topsail with the vessel itself hull down and under.

'I can't stand any more jolts,' spoke William, squinting through Selim Majid's brass telescope, 'but no cloud would behave just like that. It looks to me like a ship of some kind that has come about on another tack. That's how it acts.'

'She may not pass within miles of us, if she is coming this way at all,' observed Donnelly. 'However, it makes a good talkin' point. And conversation has slumped. Our pipes are too dusty.'

Their throats were so parched and constricted, in fact, that speech hurt them. Miss Fyffe-Harrison was beginning to droop. Mr. Stackpole's face was flushed with fever. They were devotedly attentive to each other. Donnelly had floundered into the cabin and returned with several oranges. These were saved for the women. The men chewed the peel. They regarded the distant sail with emotions curiously languid and indifferent. They had been wrung dry of excitement. Anticipation was crushed. At last Donnelly spoke up, with a trace of his old vigor.

'That vessel is liable to pass three or four miles to the east'ard of us, folks. Entirely too far to sight us. But with this wind you can make a fairly good guess at her course and position on the next long tack.'

'What of it?' snarled the Kid. His wits were dulled and his temper ragged.

'If one of us was to paddle the canoe that far, he might intercept the vessel and give her the word,'

was the patient explanation. 'It means playin' an awful long shot, but, as the lady says, we can't afford to be too particular.'

'One of us couldn't shove that dug-out very far by himself, Martin. It's too heavy, and all the gimp has been taken out of us. I'm the guy to do the stunt, of course. You have earned a vacation.'

'I'd go myself,' said the machinist's mate, with an apologetic air, 'but I have been stove up more or less. It began when the champion of the Grand Fleet smashed me in the ribs. And this dhow has been no place to recuperate in.'

'Iron men and wooden ships,' grinned the Kid. 'Let's grab a couple of those useless sailors to help me with the paddles. They'll sweat to save their own skins. If the canoe gets swamped, good-bye and take care of yourself, old-timer.'

'Pipe down, Kid. None o' that. Steady is the word.'

Avoiding the embarrassment of other farewells, Seaman Sprague slid into the canoe which had been left to trail astern. Donnelly was able to wade forward along the deck and pick out the two likeliest men. They chattered at him pitifully, weak and despairing, their naked bodies gray with dried sea salt. He counted them. Two had been lost during the night. When the survivors saw the canoe and understood its errand, they fought to be taken. Donnelly's pistol quieted them.

With two of them plying the narrow-bladed paddles, William set out on his voyage. Donnelly felt

very low-minded because of this separation. He had a premonition that the adventure was ill-fated. It was the thing to do, the final effort, but he could not coax himself into a sanguine mood. When he returned aft, he found his shipmates wonderfully recovered from their own depression. Moses Mahomet Ali wagged his tail and tried to bark as though he, too, had gained a new lease of life.

'Here *is* where I rub your back and say "*Wallah, Wallah, Wallah,*" you lop-eared runt,' grumbled Donnelly.

The canoe made very slow progress, propelled as it was by men whose paddles splashed with fitful exertion, whose bodily forces had ebbed. It crawled like a black insect over an ocean that heaved in long, slow-breathing swells. It slid into frothing valleys of water and vanished from the sight of those who followed it so anxiously. It climbed and hung for a moment before vanishing again. It toiled on with flashes to mark the laborious dip of the paddles.

The sailing vessel which it hoped to intercept was moving on a tack of several miles to the eastward. It was still a small triangle of canvas, but the hull had become a dark line penciled against the dazzling perspective of the sea. Martin Donnelly was tormented by misgivings which he kept to himself. The vessel might change course sooner than expected and so fail to sight the canoe. In this event William Sprague and his two sailors might be too exhausted to paddle back to the wreck. They would be dead and done for. A matter of no great importance, per-

haps, with the situation as it was, but it grieved Martin to think of the Kid as making a lonely finish of it. This likewise troubled Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison. Shading her eyes with her hand she said:

'The glare is very bad, Donnelly. I can't see the canoe. Can you?'

'I couldn't swear to it, ma'am. There's black dots dancing before my eyes when I try to use the spy-glass. Maybe one of 'em is it. We are so close to the water that you can't spot an object like that very far.'

Mr. Stackpole mumbled something about keeping the glass on the sailing vessel — it was the only way of finding out if the canoe reached her. He was prone, with eyes closed, his crimsoned face turned away from the sun. He had tried sitting up but it made him giddy. Donnelly laid the telescope aside. It rasped his nerves, this trying to make out which black dot was the canoe. For a long time he leaned heavily against the bulwark. It disturbed him to look at the three who were left on the wreck with him — the Arab girl who was wilting like a flower — the roving Englishwoman who would be game to the end — the staunch chief pay clerk whom chance had rudely plucked from a sedate chessboard in a Japanese garden of Zanzibar. Another day or two of this inferno, heat from a molten sky that made you gasp, no water to drink — without a scrap of food — Donnelly refused to contemplate it.

What had become of poor Kid Sprague in his clumsy dug-out canoe? Capsized, perhaps, with a

crew too weak to handle it now that the wind had freshened and the spray was flying. The haggard machinist's mate stared at the distant sailing vessel. His heart was in his throat when he perceived that the spire of canvas had altered its shape. It meant a change of course, either to come about on a tack of several miles to the northward and so pass the wreck unseen, or to come bowling splendidly to the rescue. Taut and quivering, Donnelly awaited the momentous verdict.

It was not long delayed. The decree was favorable. This he comprehended when the vessel became magically larger, her hull more clearly defined, the sails soaring taller above it. Not a schooner, as he had at first conjectured. A two-masted native vessel of lateen rig — on some voyage across the Mozambique Channel — a crew of Swahili or Malagasy — cheerful, friendly mariners whose generosity was proverbial. A little money to reward them and they would be glad to make for the nearest African port.

'The Kid stayed right side up and put a signal through,' said Martin Donnelly, his voice breaking. 'It was absolutely our last bet, and we win.'

'Oh, thank God — thank God. I — I was getting a bit discouraged,' faltered Miss Fyffe-Harrison. 'It seemed to be such a complete wash-out, don't you know.'

With a piping breeze abeam, the two-masted vessel came sweeping toward them. It meant that young William Sprague was safely aboard and they

could picture him as fairly off his head with eagerness and joy. They stared with tremulous laughter on their lips and tears in their eyes. In the bow of the drifting wreck, Selim Majid's sailors broke into a chorus of shrieking ecstasy. At first nothing was thought of it, conveying as it did the frenzied gratitude of men about to be delivered from the grave. After a time, however, there was a note of ferocity in this shrill, incessant clamor. It drew the attention of Martin Donnelly who endeavored to fathom the reason. There was menace in this exultantly barbaric outcry. It was like a war song of the desert. There was the whicker of knives in it, and unholy mirth.

Donnelly picked up the telescope. The vessel was closer hauled in order to take a position well to windward of the wreck. This revealed the whole length of her hull. It was an ancient model, as old as King Solomon, the high stern like a galleon, with a poop ornately painted and carved. Forward the lines were finely moulded, the low bow as sharp as a clipper's. Considerably larger than Selim Majid's dhow, and therefore two-masted, it resembled her in every other way, even to the gaudy sashes and turbans of the Arab officers on the poop.

Another sea-hawk from the Persian Gulf — trader, slaver, pirate, as the occasion might offer! Again it was for the ghost of Selim Majid to laugh. Blood brothers of his, these lawless wanderers, accustomed to venture far from home. The score would be settled after Selim Majid's sailors had told

their story. Donnelly etched it in a few words. They were as mordant as acid.

'We captured this dhow and treated the crew rough. The skipper is dead — not a mite of doubt of that. And several others got in the way of bullets — besides the one I busted with the butt of a gun. And by way of makin' a thorough job of it, we set the ship afire. Yes, it's liable to make those cut-throats yonder feel pretty peevish, if you ask me.'

'They know it already, from the two sailors in the canoe,' said Beatrice. Then she wrung her hands as she fairly wailed:

'What about poor William?'

The silent Zuleida, realizing the unexpected peril that had enmeshed her American sailor lad, was heard to mourn, like an elegy:

'*But-oah-yo'-Kid.*'

'You said it. I'm afraid he won't last long,' sighed Donnelly. 'They may have blown out his light already. It's fine of you ladies to have the Kid on your mind, but the deal is certainly switched for all hands of us. We can't stand 'em off. They are bound to get us.'

XXX

Cassius Stackpole heard the dismal tidings and, shaking off the grip of fever, struggled to his feet. Like the others he could see nothing else than the sinister two-masted dhow and recognized it for what it was. Would the naval uniform restrain those Arabs? It had failed to check the wrath of Selim Majid. And here was greater provocation.

Mr. Stackpole lurched dizzily toward the bulwark for support. He found that his vision wavered. The sea and the sky seemed to be whirling about him. It was so difficult for him to focus the hostile dhow that he tried not to look at it. In another direction, more to the northeast, he fancied he saw a trailing banner of smoke and the thread-like spars of a steamer. Of course it wasn't there at all. His eyes were playing tricks with him. His mind was befuddled with fever. Therefore he said nothing about it. But perhaps he ought to mention it. Then his chin dropped and thick drowsiness took hold of him.

Stepping back, Donnelly collided with him. This awoke the chief pay clerk who waved an arm and muttered wearily. Donnelly followed the gesture. One glance and he, too, was incredulous, but he jumped for the telescope. He was a man very doubtful of his own sanity. And then he proceeded to prove that he had turned lunatic, for he threw both his arms around Miss Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison and

swung her off her feet. With a roar like the bull of Bashan, he surged at Zuleida and kissed her with more fervor than ever young William had displayed.

'It can't be true — not in a thousand years,' he hoarsely chanted. 'I'm cuckoo, but there she comes —all her boilers lighted off, by the smoke she makes. But if she left Zanzibar on time, she ought to be in Mozambique by now.'

A coughing spell halted his thundering declamation. He could hear the chief pay clerk muttering:

'It looked like the *Toledo* — but I knew she couldn't be there — it was the tall radio masts —'

'The *Toledo?*' spluttered Donnelly. 'There's nothing like her in the Indian Ocean. Oh boy, no cruisin' speed about that! Look at her turn up knots like a railroad train. More like a test run under full power.'

Slender, high-prowed, incomparably beautiful in their sight, the scout cruiser tore through the restless seas. A test run under full power? This meant better than thirty knots. Would she veer from her headlong course to take a look at a sailing dhow apparently standing by a wreck almost submerged? So long as rescue was already provided, this would be no concern of hers. Spoil a test run unless the reason was imperative? Not if Donnelly knew the captain and the chief engineer.

This appalling doubt smote them and yet it could not shake the belief that they were to be saved. How could it be ordered otherwise? Therefore the exultant joy that transfigured their faces was unclouded.

Nor did its brightness diminish until the lean gray cruiser was racing no more than two miles distant from them. Time for her to slow down with all that headway on her, said Donnelly. It looked as if they had no intention of stopping her. What was the matter with the dumb-bells? A few minutes more and she would be rushing by them.

Aye, she paid them no heed whatever and was bound to Mozambique with a hundred thousand horse-power urging the quivering hull in the four-hour test under all twelve boilers. Abreast of them she was and passing on her way when a light winked on the signal bridge. It danced in a rapid dot-and-dash of the blinker code. To Donnelly this was inexplicable. He was able to translate the white flashes.

'R—E—P—E—A—T'

'For the love of Mike, repeat *what?*' he cried. 'We haven't sent 'em anything. No use. They couldn't see me wave my shirt that far.'

In sheer bewilderment he glanced toward the two-masted dhow. A bright spark caught his eye. It came and went, dot-and-dash, haltingly, in the cadence of the blinker code. Brief and to the point, as the dumbfounded Donnelly spelled it aloud.

'G—O—B—S H—E—L—P'

'What do you think o' that? The Kid is there with bells on! You can't lose him.'

It was cause for rejoicing that they had not lost

him. His message was read and understood by a wondering signal quartermaster of the *Toledo*. The cruiser eased her foaming gait and turned from the headlong road to Mozambique. She described a graceful curve and stopped her engines within hailing distance of the large dhow whose Arabs were now thoroughly pacific and repentant. They were fairly under the muzzles of the battery of six-inch guns. They devoutly desired to be let alone.

A limber youth in a dirty suit of whites, a round white hat cocked jauntily over one eye, was seen to dash to the side of the dhow and dive into the Indian Ocean. Then he swam to a dug-out canoe which was tied astern and inserted himself therein. In a leisurely manner he paddled toward the cruiser. Was it fatigue or reluctance that caused him to display no more ardor? Seaman William Sprague was about to report to the officer of the deck as returning from a liberty which had been overstayed by several days.

The cruiser's rail was crowded with bluejackets, hundreds of them, whose cheers were mingled with loud laughter. The resurrected Kid looked as if he had been sleeping in a coal bunker. He stirred the immaculate Navy's sense of humor.

By this time the cruiser was drifting closer to the wreck. A boatswain's pipe called the life-boat crew on the run. Smartly they lowered away, with a junior lieutenant in charge. It was perceived that two of the four survivors on the cabin roof of the forlorn hulk were women. A gangway was hastily lowered into position.

The castaways made an effort to carry it off bravely. The chief pay clerk swayed to his feet, with Martin Donnelly's arm upholding him. His other arm steadied the Englishwoman. It was amazing to see how the wilted Zuleida revived. In a warship were always many young officers, handsome, generous, who had an eye for feminine charms. It was consoling to think of them.

The life-boat was approaching. In the stern-sheets stood the dapper junior lieutenant. There were gold bars on his shoulders. His mustache was delicious. He doffed his cap with the grace of a courtier. Zuleida actually dimpled and sparkled. Alas, it was to infer that William, the sailor boy, might be regarded as a finished episode. The affections of phantom ladies were apt to be unsubstantial. It had to be so.

The transfer to the boat was expeditious. All they carried with them was the veteran sea-dog, Moses Mahomet Ali. The decks of the cruiser became respectfully silent. There was no encitement to mirth in this scene so eloquent of suffering and tragic adventure. Two bedraggled women — a grimy, tattered machinist's mate and a once respectable chief pay clerk — wearing rags for bandages. They were helped to ascend the steps of the gangway. The executive officer presented himself to Miss Fyffe-Harrison. He was sympathetic and efficient, restraining his rampant curiosity. Offering his arm, he said:

'There will be plenty of time to tell us about it.

The captain sends his compliments. My cabin and bath are at your service. I am putting in a cot for the young lady. My steward will bring you soup, coffee, and sandwiches at once. The doctor will call to see if he can be of service. A messenger will take your clothes to the laundry whenever you ring for him.'

'Thank you so much,' and she began to sob. As they walked slowly forward, between the rows of trim bluejackets who snapped to attention, the marvelous order, cleanliness, and security of it all fairly tore the woman's emotions to pieces. She had been snatched from hell into Heaven. Once, twice, she turned to look behind her, but Cassius Stackpole had been carried bodily to his room in the warrant officers' country. His attendants were messmates tried and true, the chief boatswain, the chief carpenter, and the electrical gunner.

Presently the executive officer returned to the wheel-house where the captain paced to and fro with signs of impatience.

'What sort of a mess is this?' he demanded.

'I pried a little of it out of Seaman Sprague, sir. He came off in a canoe from the big dhow. It sounds like a nightmare. I'll swear I don't know what to believe.'

'How about those Arabs or niggers that are left in the bow of the wreck?'

'The dhow will stand by and take them off, sir. No sense in our being cluttered up with them. Sprague had a close shave, I imagine. They were about to knife him when they saw us coming.'

'What does Donnelly say?'

'I didn't bother him,' replied the executive. 'The doctor sent him to the sick bay to have his face dressed. I thought nothing could put a nick in it.'

'How about the chief pay clerk? His head is all tied up.'

'A bullet caromed off it. He feels pretty groggy. We shall have to give them time to recuperate. I couldn't get a sane report right away to save my soul. Miss Fyffe-Harrison, the Englishwoman, stood it remarkably well, but she needs a day or so in bed. That girl with them —'

'I noticed her,' said the captain.

'Yes, one would,' remarked the executive. 'I'm glad we can put her ashore at Mozambique. As president of the wardroom mess, I refuse to have the youngsters demoralized.'

'Our test run is knocked into a cocked hat. All right, resume your course. Standard cruising speed — sixteen knots.'

XXXI

A FEW hours' sleep and William Sprague felt able to crawl out of his hammock and stay awake long enough to seek more food. This obtained, he wandered into the sick bay, with a precious saxophone under his arm, to find out how the world fared with Martin Donnelly. The latter was much disgruntled at being detained as an invalid. His cheek was neatly criss-crossed with strips of plaster. The barber had shaved the rest of his rough-hewn visage. He sat on the edge of a bunk and mildly swore at a pharmacist's mate who told him to stay quiet and behave himself. The entrance of Seaman Sprague was a rift in the gloom. The patient permitted himself a smile of welcome.

'Thank God you didn't have the saxophone to make it worse, Kid. Don't tootle it in here or the best of friends must part.'

'Be yourself, old-timer. I just wanted to look at it. The Jolly Jazz Babies orchestra has missed me. A couple of days and I'll put the old pep in it. What do you know about things? I was dead to the world.'

'I know a-plenty, Kid,' and Donnelly's aspect was funereal. 'Before I fill you full of woe to the gills, tell me how you flashed the signal to the ship. You didn't have no mirror.'

'Yes, I did. Zuleida had a little gold vanity case. She tied it inside her clothes, but the chain broke so she gave it to me to put in my pocket. It's a good

thing she was so anxious to keep her powder dry. Navy stuff!'

'You were on the job, boy. This speed-wagon was going too fast to hesitate if you hadn't given her the high sign. Those Arabs acted mean to you, did they?'

'Forget it, Martin. A mighty disagreeable experience, let me tell you. Too much like the time Selim Majid butted in on me and Zuleida. Now what's on *your* mind? The little birdies ought to be singing in your heart.'

The dismal Donnelly ignored this flight of poesy as ill-timed. Strongly he demanded to know:

'How come this ship to be where she was? Have you tried to figure that out?'

'Nope, not yet. I don't feel up to it. Delayed at Zanzibar for engine-room repairs? Or was it the weather?'

'Huh, your buddies are mercifully holdin' out on you, Kid. It was *us* that tied the ship up for two days — on her shake-down cruise with a skipper that is daffy about his schedule.'

'On the level? You mean to say he didn't want to leave us on the beach? I didn't know I had made such a hit with him.'

'Don't get flippant and foolish,' advised Donnelly. 'When you know what I know, you'll go play yourself a dirge on that saxophone. Delay his ship to look for us? You don't seem to be acquainted with Captain Spencer B. Isham, U.S.N. There was too many angry people looking for *him*. That's why he

couldn't get away on time. His yeoman was in here to see me a little while ago. He wanted to put me wise. To hear him tell it, there wasn't enough room at the starboard gangway for all the official boats that came off from shore. Zanzibar had never seen anything like it.

'First it was a snorty leftenant from *H.M.S. Spitfire* with a note from her commanding officer. Torpedo Gunner Jack Goddard, late heavy-weight champion of the Grand Fleet, had been fetched off on a stretcher, and what about that? He was expected to live, thanks to a wonderful constitution, says the leftenant, but this was no fault of the American bluejacket that had slammed him on the bean. Captain Spencer B. Isham, U.S.N., was annoyed and polite. He expressed his regrets and would investigate the matter.

'No sooner had the leftenant shoved off than the officer of the deck announced Major Whosis from the Department of Police, a chesty gazebo all decorated up with service ribbons and twirlin' a little cane. His sad story was that one of his best Sikh sergeants had been freighted to the hospital and was expected to live, thanks to a wonderful constitution, says the Major. He had been shot by an ebony elephant in the hands of a murderous American bluejacket. It was in the same engagement that the leftenant had reported.

'Kid, I'm telling it to you just as the captain's yeoman passed it along to me. The Major he wanted to know. Of course Captain Spencer B. Isham was

fit to be tied by this time. He frets easy and is high strung, but he kept his safety-valve from poppin' and assured the Major the matter would be promptly investigated. If this sounds sort of monotonous and too much alike, don't blame me.

'By now the officer of the deck was afraid to send in any more visitors. And the gob on orderly duty at the captain's door peeked in and saw him walk back and forth very fast and kick his Oriental rugs out of the way. Then the orderly ushered in a perspirin' Goanese gent from the railroad office. He was all worked up and delivered orations. A terrible man from the American man-of-war had run away with his locomotive. Imagine that!'

Here Seaman William Sprague interrupted. He had been standing in an attitude of petrified attention, with his mouth open. The saxophone had lost all power to soothe him.

'We meant to pay for the loan of the little bullgine, Martin. Mr. Stackpole can testify to that. Remember how fussy he was about it? Great grief! What was the use of being rescued?'

'We saved the women, as laid down in the regulations for shipwreck at sea,' answered Donnelly. 'Now let me get to the end of this. The fat guy from Goa staged a harrowin' scene. He said we had hurled insults and epitaphs at him. The yeoman was called in to set it all down in shorthand. He says that after this railroad man was led out he shut his note-book quick for fear he might get into it some of the remarks uttered by Captain Spencer B. Isham. I hate

to string this out, Kid. You are a boy that deserves rest and quiet. You earned it. But it's best to be prepared.'

'Go on, Martin. Why didn't I stay in my hammock and sleep. I wish I had *never* waked up.'

'Well, the next noise from Zanzibar was made by the military aide of Sir Howard Brismayne, the British Resident. This official caller was a captain of His Majesty's Umpty-Um Ancient and Honorable Artillery, or words to that effect, and he had swallowed a ram-rod. He was extremely sorry to inform Captain Spencer Isham of *U.S.S. Toledo* that a launch flying the flag of His Highness, Seyyid Khalifa, the Sultan of Zanzibar, had been demolished by an American sailor and the crew left in the water. In the launch was a cousin of the Sultan, Mr. Azzan-bin-Hassin.'

'I wish you had scored a bull's-eye on that gink when you dropped the water-cask,' viciously exclaimed William Sprague. 'If he hadn't driven Zuleida away from home that night, we wouldn't be as bad off as we are now.'

'But Mr. Stackpole and Miss Fyffe-Harrison couldn't have been shipmates, Kid,' said Martin Donnelly, in a softer voice. He actually seemed dreamy as he added, 'It's the only romance I was ever mixed up in. I was — what do you call it — like a little tin god from the machine in one way or another.'

'Yes, and you'll wear a tin ear when the skipper and the executive finish bawling you out,' retorted

William. 'What do you s'pose they mean to do to us? It's up to you and me, Martin, to frame an alibi for Old Man Stackpole. We *gotta* do it. It's awkward for him anyhow — with his lady-love on board and him a warrant officer, and all this bunk about rank and social position. I don't believe Miss Fyffe-Harrison cares about that. She is a changed woman.'

'You bet we'll try to alibi him out of it,' stubbornly declared the machinist's mate. 'You and I can take our medicine. But we don't want to let this romance have a crimp put in it. The ship will be in Mozambique by to-morrow night. The skipper is liable to cut his stay short so as to pick up his schedule again and head south for Durban and Cape Town. Miss Fyffe-Harrison gets set ashore at Mozambique, with Zuleida on her hands. Some handful, at that. And Mr. Stackpole flat on his back and plenty to worry him.'

'He never did check up all her financial accounts and so forth, did he, Martin, to find out where she was at?'

'No, and they were lost when the dhow was burned and scuttled. I heard her say she had saved her letter of credit and she was fixed all right to get home to England.'

'It seems as if they had been treated rough enough,' sighed William. 'A couple of gobs like us can take it as it comes.'

XXXII

THE *Toledo* made a landfall on the African coast late in the afternoon and slowed to a few knots, the captain preferring to wait outside until morning. The harbor ranges and bearings might not be accurate. It was unfamiliar water. This was his first cruise in the Mozambique Channel and all risks were to be sedulously avoided. The ship therefore remained at sea another night.

Mr. Cassius Stackpole felt profoundly grateful. By so much it delayed parting from the woman he loved. He was recovering from the touch of fever but felt weak and disconsolate, no longer braced to thrust obstacles aside and to confront perils with unshaken fortitude. Partly it was the realization that the laws and customs of the naval service once more bound him. He was no longer his own free man, mastering circumstances, gambling with life and death, but a methodical subordinate of the paymaster's supply office. It troubled him to know that Miss Fyffe-Harrison had been the guest of the wardroom officers at luncheon while it was impossible to conceive of himself as receiving such an invitation.

Officially he could never be a gentleman so long as he remained in the Navy. During the World War, most of the warrant officers in the *Toledo* had held temporary commissions as lieutenants, with credit to their ships and their country. They had been de-

prived of this rank when the personnel was reduced. Most of them were men of great technical ability along their own lines. The chief carpenter, for instance, was not at all what his obsolete title implied. Far more intimately and exactly than any officer on board, he knew every detail of the construction of this immensely complicated steel fabric. In any of its compartments he was at home. On shore he would have been called an expert engineer in steel structural work. It was the cheerful, middle-aged chief carpenter himself, Mr. McCord, who tiptoed into Cassius Stackpole's room and took a chair beside the berth.

'The doctor will take you off the sick report tomorrow, I hear,' said he. 'Then you can tell us all about it. Donnelly insisted on going on watch today. When he came off, some of the black gang made him loosen up. They were back on the fantail cooling off. The chief bo's'n and I listened in. What were you trying to do? Make Sinbad the Sailor look like a two-spot?'

'Trying to get back to the ship, McCord,' replied the chief pay clerk in all soberness. 'The Lord knows we did the best we could. What do you hear about it? The captain dropped in to see me this morning, to ask how I felt. He stayed only a few minutes. He was pleasant, but of course he couldn't lay into a sick man.'

'He hasn't sent for Donnelly or Sprague yet, so I suppose there will be nothing doing until after we leave Mozambique. He is always smothered in

paper work during these short runs between ports. And he isn't feeling any too lively himself. He had to make three trips ashore in Zanzibar — two of them in the middle of the day — to try to pacify the various official Johnnies who had been out to see him about the rumpus you wild men kicked up. The sun knocked him — he thought it might be heat-apoplexy. I called it suppressed emotions.'

'He must be fond of us,' pensively remarked the chief pay clerk. 'Of course I am anxious to have him get the straight story as soon as possible. I don't know how much of it he will believe. In fact, McCord, as I lie here and shut my eyes I can't believe more than half of it myself. It seems preposterous now, but it was all most confoundedly real at the time. My record ought to help me, don't you think? I have never shown the slightest tendency to turn outlaw. But I'm afraid that Donnelly and Kid Sprague and I can never make it sound truly convincing.'

'Here, don't worry yourself into a relapse over it,' exclaimed the chief carpenter. 'When we found you adrift, it looked as if something very unusual had happened to your liberty party. That will help. Of course what got the skipper's goat was that you had run off to sea in an Arab dhow with the apparent intention of deserting. What you will have to beat into his head is that you couldn't help it.'

'But Miss Fyffe-Harrison can make all that clear, McCord. She knows the whole story from soup to nuts. The captain won't doubt her word.'

'I grant you that, Stackpole. She is a lady and a thoroughbred. The whole crew has sized her up already. They intend to cheer her over the side at Mozambique. But she hasn't spun the yarn to the captain yet. I met her on deck just now. Here's something that ought to make you buck up. She told me that Captain Isham had invited her to dine with him to-night — a bid from royalty, she called it — the two of them in his grand cabin.'

'Fine! This will give her a chance to explain things,' cried Mr. Stackpole. 'It takes a load off my mind, McCord.'

'Guess again,' said the chief carpenter. 'She politely turned him down. Another engagement. She was expecting to dine with Mr. Stackpole.'

'This is the first I have heard of it. Of course I wanted to ask her, but I don't believe I feel up to sitting it through in the mess-room.'

'You don't have to. The lady has it all arranged with our steward. Dinner will be served right here in your room — a card table set for two. She told me it might be a farewell party in case you shouldn't feel squiffy enough to go ashore in Mozambique to-morrow and see her at the hotel. You seem to be a devoted pair of shipmates.'

Mr. Stackpole's face was tell-tale evidence that this might be so. He was no longer disconsolate. It made no difference to Beatrice, then, what his position was in the disciplinary organization of the cruiser. She had declared herself. How splendid of her! A woman who knew her own mind and was

ready to defy conventions. He had been fearful lest their experiences together might seem to belong to a world of fantastic illusions.

'But look here, McCord, the captain must have been taken aback. His dinner invitation declined in favor of a chief pay clerk? It hit him smack in the eye.'

'Between wind and water. You can safely say that he had never heard anything like it in his life. Miss Fyffe-Harrison said he congealed — her first touch of chilly weather in the tropics. He was courteous, of course, but lost all interest in her. It makes you no stronger with him, old man, but it can't be helped.'

'What the devil do I care?' cried Cassius in trumpet tones. 'I know where *she* stands. Captain Spencer B. Isham can put that in his pipe and smoke it.'

Mr. McCord had to leave on some errand of duty, still chuckling to himself as he stopped in his room to change into blue overalls. That night in Zanzibar had shaken the chief pay clerk out of his rut. He was not the same man. The Navy cramped his style. A desk in the paymaster's office could never hold him down.

This was true enough. Having made up his mind to resign from the service, Cassius Stackpole could regard its restrictions without resentment now that he felt sure that they had not influenced Beatrice's feeling for him. This was the big thing. As for any punishment that an excessively irritated Captain

Isham might deal out, the chief pay clerk was concerned for himself only as it might blot his excellent record. He was jealous of his honorable repute and wished to carry it unblemished into civil life. He felt much more seriously, however, for Martin Donnelly and the young seaman on his first cruise. And yet he was reluctant to ask Beatrice to intercede with the captain. It touched his own pride, involving him as it did, for they were three men in the same boat.

The little dinner in Mr. Stackpole's room ignored the conventions. The Navy was presumed to rescue and care for castaways and to get rid of them at the next port of call, but warrant officers were not expected to entertain ladies in their rooms as though a scout cruiser were a frivolous liner.

This dinner was an exclusive affair and they had their own concerns to discuss. There had been many interruptions on board the dhow. It was Mr. McCord who ventured to knock after an hour or so, suggesting that perhaps Miss Fyffe-Harrison might care to look at the motion picture show on deck. It was a fine night with a pleasant breeze. It might refresh her.

'Mr. Stackpole ought to have a rest,' said she. 'I'll come down again soon. Thanks, Mr. McCord. I don't know when I have seen a good cinema.'

They passed up the steel stairway to the wardroom deck, then up another flight to the superstructure in which were the captain's and the executive's spacious quarters. Captain Isham had just stepped

into the passageway to stroll aft and see the picture. He bowed distantly to the Englishwoman. He had dined alone. It made him feel no more gracious to note that her escort was the chief carpenter.

He had reached the open deck when a black urchin darted from behind a boat and halted his solitary progress. Little Matheos, the Abyssinian waif, had been persuaded to wear a white blouse and flapping trousers cut in bluejacket style by the ship's tailor. To all appearances he was a member of the enlisted force, an absurd miniature edition. Just now the orderly had chased him away from the captain's door and a gunner's mate had spanked him when he tried it again. After that he had cleverly concealed himself in order to waylay the overlord of the warship. Quick was the intelligence of this sea orphan with the brindled wool. He had been hearing words that he painfully pieced together, hovering about this group or that and watching the expressions of their faces. Some trouble was in the wind for Donnelly, the strong, scowling warrior who had bought him for a price from his crippled father in Djibuti; trouble also for the Ras Stackpole who had won his first allegiance. The captain was angry. He had been very angry in those two days when the ship had waited at Zanzibar. The gossip had run through the berth deck.

All those boats from shore with red-faced officials in uniform — it had looked to Matheos like the mutterings of war. And now that the culprits were restored to the ship, penalties were hanging over them.

One felt this in the air. The sailors were afraid for them, because the captain, whose will was absolute, had been so angry. In Abyssinia there was one penalty for those who offended the high powers and broke the laws. Their bodies dangled from the trees in the streets of Addis-Abeba, or were flung into pits after the sword had done its work.

It was not in the primitively loyal heart of Matheos to beg for mercy in behalf of his benefactors. He was not so foolish as this. He indicated his purpose by falling upon his knees in front of the surprised Captain Isham and bringing him to a halt. In dumb show Matheos vigorously sawed the back of his neck with his hand. This was how he endeavored to convey his meaning. Fidelity compelled him to offer himself as a sacrifice, if any one's head had to come off. It was the blood atonement.

The ruler of the warship pushed him to one side, exclaiming:

'Here, take this young nuisance away and keep him off this deck. What's the matter with him? I don't want to cut his head off.'

Miss Fyffe-Harrison, standing near, whispered to Mr. McCord:

'Do you know what it's all about? The little beggar is frightfully in earnest about something.'

'I can make a pretty fair shot at it. He jumped overboard to save the executive when we were coming down the coast. Now it's Mr. Stackpole and your other shipwrecked friends. He thinks they are due to get a death sentence or something like that.'

'My word, what *do* you mean?' she cried as they moved away from Captain Isham. 'Why, I took it for granted that they were forgiven. They worried a lot about being deserters — a ten-day limit I believe it was. But they came back in plenty of time to escape that. Mr. Stackpole said nothing about it to me.'

'He naturally wouldn't. The captain doesn't understand what you people went through. Nobody has really told him yet.'

'Then I ought to have dined with him, Mr. McCord. And I simply made matters worse.'

'A naval vessel has its own way of doing things, Miss Fyffe-Harrison, and perhaps it would be resented if a woman tried to interfere.'

She bit her lip and said nothing more. They walked aft between hammocks slung wherever the lashings could be tied, to boats and guns and stanchions, in order to get away from the stifling heat between decks. Under an electric bulb, Seaman William Sprague was gathering up a pack of cards with which he had been playing solitaire. He paused to rub the pudgy stomach of Moses Mahomet Ali. The pup wore a canvas collar stitched by the sailmaker's mate. Suspended from it was a medal hammered from a silver rupee. When the captain passed along, the pup rushed out to bark at him. William hauled him back by a crooked hind leg. There was positive awe in his voice as he murmured:

'Game as a pebble! Scaring lions and everything was some stunt. But a dog that don't even hesitate

to tell a hard-boiled guy like Captain Spencer B. Isham, U.S.N., where he gets off is absolutely in a class by himself.'

The picture screen abaft the funnels lifted against the stars. Chairs had been placed in rows for the officers. The captain's chair, fetched from his cabin, stood in front of the others and a little apart. Custom decreed that he should always be more or less remote and detached.

In the midst of a merry group of junior lieutenants and ensigns was the beautiful Zuleida. As a passenger she was an episode unique and gorgeous. They were making the most of it. Lowly Seaman William Sprague was outranked and superseded. Zuleida had seen him plying a paint-brush and disgustingly bespattered as one of a squad of wretched slaves obedient to the slightest word of a two-fisted boatswain's mate. The pearl of the harem had sat at the wardroom table with twenty magnificent officers to adore her.

The executive, catching a glimpse of Miss Fyffe-Harrison in the dusky, unlighted space, hastened to offer her a chair. He placed it beside the captain's. She hesitated, afraid that Mr. McCord might feel slighted if she did not sit with the warrant officers. She had made her choice and naval etiquette could go hang. But Mr. McCord said something in her ear. She nodded and smiled. He would explain it to the others. She had a purpose in view.

It might have been noticed that Captain Isham paid little attention to the screen. He was getting

acquainted with Beatrice Fyffe-Harrison, accomplished woman of the world, who had never met a man that intimidated her. What she had to say made the filmed melodrama seem threadbare and piffling. It was prodigious, and, as told by her, he found himself compelled to believe every word of it. He was a studious, hard-working officer whose abilities had won him the command of this crack cruiser. There had been few thrilling episodes in his own career. And he had seen so many escapades in foreign ports, with liquor mostly at the bottom of them, that he was blasé and skeptical. It had seemed extraordinary to find his missing men afloat on the wreck of a dhow. The respectable chief pay clerk was the enigma. It didn't seem at all in character.

The Englishwoman, of course, had puzzled Captain Isham. The situation had been open to misconstruction. It had suggested a hasty elopement from Zanzibar. Prejudiced by this first impression, he had preferred not to meddle. It jarred his professional sense of the fitness of things. The feminine factor had no place in a naval vessel. Aside from what the courtesies required, he had seen no more of Miss Fyffe-Harrison than possible.

This had been enough, however, to persuade him that his suspicion of scandal had been unwarranted. She was distinctly not that sort. For the purpose of reading the riddle, he had invited her to dine with him. Declining this mark of his favor, she had made herself conspicuous with the chief pay clerk. Now, however, as he listened to her voice, clear and low

and unemotional, he realized that his attitude had been shabby, that he should have recognized her at once for what she was. The whole affair had annoyed him so greatly that his judgment had been warped.

'I knew very little about the American Navy,' she was saying, 'until I went to sea with those Trojans of yours. How proud you must be that they belong to your ship! In time of peace there is so little chance for shining deeds of valor and chivalry.'

'I'll admit that you are changing my opinion of them,' replied Captain Isham. 'My intention was to give them all the law allowed, as soon as I could find time to haul them up. You would understand if you had been in the ship at Zanzibar. Pardon me, you were in the midst of telling me about setting the vessel on fire, after this Selim Majid had secretly changed course in the night. Please go on with it.'

'But I jumped right into the middle of it, Captain Isham. I was so anxious to have you understand how well your men behaved. I really ought to begin with the morning I took them aboard my dhow, after Mr. Stackpole had rescued the phantom lady.'

'Omit nothing. This is entrancing.'

'I shall have to be the historian,' said she. 'You can never coax the details out of them. They will be too much in awe of you. They won't be able to make it sound plausible at all. But they couldn't invent it, could they?'

'Not in a hundred years, Miss Fyffe-Harrison.

Please don't leave me in this state of breathless suspense. Can't we go on with it?'

'I'm afraid not. I popped on deck for a little while. I promised to go back to Mr. Stackpole's room and say good-night. He will be lonesome.'

This ruffled the autocrat of *U.S.S. Toledo*, but his restraint was admirable. He was willing to put up with a good deal in the hope of hearing the rest of the epic of Selim Majid's dhow. The woman had a gift for colorful narrative. And, as he had agreed, the story would never be disclosed in adequate form by his three Trojans.

'To think what I missed when you refused to dine with me to-night,' sighed Captain Isham.

'Why not dine with me at the hotel in Mozambique to-morrow?' said she. 'Mr. Stackpole may be there, if he feels strong enough to toddle ashore.'

'If I am not too busy with official calls and so on—'

'Oh, don't be silly, my dear man. If Mr. Stackpole is good enough for me, he will have to do for you. You can leave your precious dignity on board the ship. I promise to reward you with the tale of the Kid and the Thwarted Kiss. Wild horses couldn't drag it out of William Sprague.'

'I shall be delighted to dine with you. Your invitation is a command,' replied Captain Isham, handsomely capitulating. She bade him adieu and went below. The august captain of the cruiser was merely another obstinate man to be put in his place. If intercession were needed, she would make a

thorough job of it. She felt grateful to piteous, impossible little Matheos who, in his own way, had shown her that something ought to be done about it. And Cassius Stackpole, with his own complex of masculine vanity, had concealed from her the fact that she was the essential witness in the case.

Among those present at the picture show was Martin Donnelly, sitting with a group of chief petty officers. He had very little to say. The picture interested him. Some of the scenes were laid in the frozen North — snow and dog-teams and men in furs. It was pleasingly different from his recent watch in the fireroom. And there was romance and action — strong men who were quick on the trigger. One of them found gold. What did he do with it? Blow it on himself? No. Staked a friend who had fought through one jam after another with him and who had been robbed of his claims by a smooth villain with forged papers. This was the proper thing to do, reflected Martin. Shipmates, stand by!

His thoughts wandered from the screen. He felt peculiarly responsive to sentiment. This was because he had been a partner, so to speak, in the romance of Cassius Stackpole and the Englishwoman. He felt a proprietary interest in them. His own affairs were unpleasant to dwell upon, with the captain's temper all shot to pieces over that liberty in Zanzibar. And he, Donnelly, had been warned to watch his step after the innocent purchase of Matheos in Djibuti and the international consequences thereof.

It was less harassing to let his mind rove in reveries inspired by the picture screen. He recalled something that Mr. Stackpole had said to Miss Fyffe-Harrison during that last night on the wreck when they had sat two and two in the moonlight, with Donnelly as a drowsy observer. The chief pay clerk had no great amount of money laid by for an emergency. He had lived well when ashore — enjoying sociability, with friends in every port — let his income slip through his fingers. He was a bachelor and had expected to stay in the service until retired. He was courageous about the future, but he ought to have some leeway to establish himself in civil life and to pull the Englishwoman's finances out of the fire.

Donnelly pondered over this in his slow, serious way. He found enjoyment in imagining himself as the friend in need, somehow staking this sea-going romance in which he had played a part. We all dream of playing Midas to those we are fond of. Secretly, of course.

'What else is money good for?' said Donnelly to himself. 'If somebody was to leave me a fortune, I'd know exactly what to do with it. The long-lost uncle from Alaska or somewheres like that! I don't need it myself. If I could live through what I did in the last few days, I'm liable to kick along in this man's Navy for years and years.'

This day-dreaming was a most agreeable pastime in which the prosaic machinist's mate had seldom indulged. He elaborated the details. A wedding

present artfully sent to keep them guessing! He enjoyed it until the last reel of the melodrama flickered from the screen. This dissolved the spell. He came back to his own world which was confined within the steel walls of the scout cruiser.

'As if I didn't have troubles enough of my own. I don't know but what I was happier aboard the dhow.'

XXXIII

THE doctor permitted Mr. Stackpole to go ashore for dinner in Mozambique, which was better than letting him fret himself into a temperature on board ship. Captain Isham punctually presented himself at the hotel and was a charming guest, as he well knew how to be. He discovered that his chief pay clerk had other qualities than those of a cog in an exact and unremitting machine.

Zuleida was with them. This was not because she wished to be. Far from it. Three young officers had engaged a table in an alcove, with flowers and a special menu, but Miss Fyffe-Harrison was still on the active list as chaperon. However, the three infatuated young gentlemen were permitted to join the party for coffee and cigarettes and, a little later, they serenaded the flower of Dar-es Salaam with a guitar, a banjo, and a ukulele. She knew how to blow kisses at them and they laid their hands on their hearts and bowed in unison when she soulfully, musically called out in farewell:

'*But-oah-yo'-Kid!*'

Captain Isham excused himself early on the score of radio messages to send and letters to write. He could be a tactful man. He perceived that, with Zuleida locked in her room, the way would be cleared for Mr. Stackpole and Miss Fyffe-Harrison

to spend the rest of the evening together. He said, at parting:

'Good fortune to you, O Scheherazade of the Thousand and One Nights.'

'Allah go with you, O Caliph of Bagdad, and be merciful,' responded Beatrice. 'Use the bow-string not too hastily and remember that these thy servants are "good guys."'

'Mr. Stackpole has acquired merit in my sight,' returned the commander of the *Toledo*. 'And he is greatly to be congratulated that there was a woman in it.'

The *Toledo* went to sea early the next morning. Soon after general quarters an impudent young messenger found Martin Donnelly. Sawing the back of his neck with his hand, he rapped out:

'Captain wants to see you in his room, big one. Here is where you get yours. Wow, but the whole ship feels sorry for you.'

Donnelly cuffed the messenger and trudged forward, sad-eyed, with shoulders bowed. He couldn't even try to explain. The more you thought it over, the more twistified and unreasonable it all had been. He halted in the passageway outside the captain's door. The tow-headed orderly, with a holster on his hip, grinned and whispered behind his hand:

'Go to it, bo. Don't you weaken. Who wouldn't sell a farm to go to sea?'

'How does he open up this morning, son? Seen him bite the furniture?'

'He gave the steward a call-down at breakfast

because the eggs were too soft. And when the first lieutenant came out a few minutes ago, you couldn't see him for dust.'

Donnelly crossed the threshold. Captain Isham sat at his flat-topped desk, glasses on his nose, alertly disposing of a wire basket full of routine papers. His yeoman, a saturnine young man, stood at his elbow and swiftly took dictation. He winked at Donnelly who was allowed to stand silent on a rug for something like five minutes. He reminded himself of a castaway on a raft. The yeoman retired to his office with a glance of profound commiseration. Captain Isham tilted his chair, lighted a cigar, and abruptly exclaimed:

'In the old Navy they used to keel-haul them. Our present punishments are entirely too mild to fit a case like yours. You agree with me, don't you?'

'You said it, sir. I heard about the trouble that piled up on you at Zanzibar, all on account of us. It does look like I was a riot, but, cross my heart, Mr. Stackpole was in it accidental all the way through. And a boy like Kid Sprague, on his first cruise, ain't really responsible for what he does.'

'So you were the leading conspirator? After I had put you on probation, Donnelly?'

'You wouldn't understand it, sir, so what's the use? Not if I was to say it with blue-prints.'

'That defense wouldn't carry you far in a general court.'

'It took me a long way, sir, and I had a mighty busy time to get back at all. If you please, how did

you square it with all those official delegations that put up such a holler? I'm naturally interested.'

'You ought to be! By the way, how many Spitfires were in the rough-house in the Jap place?'

'Six, sir. They called the *U.S.S. Toledo* a Yankee tin-pot and ordered us to fetch 'em lashin's of beer — us in uniform and proud of our own ship and service.'

'And you resented it?'

'You might call it that, sir. We walked out on 'em. They tried to stop us. I had a curio in my hand and I fanned 'em with it.'

'What next?'

'Nothing much. The cops wanted to argue with us. I was anxious to side-step any scandal because we had Mr. Stackpole with us, so we went on our way. Then we hired a special train to get back to the ship with — that is, we couldn't settle for it right then because the railroad office was closed. The train missed connections so we tried to return from liberty in the dhow that Miss Fyffe-Harrison had chartered for a pleasure cruise. There was some more hard luck of one kind or another, and we had to be picked up at sea. Spoiled your test run under full power. And I hear she turned up thirty-three point fifty-seven.'

Captain Spencer B. Isham's eyes had a hard glint behind the glasses. There was a long pause. Donnelly squirmed. He was somberly apprehensive. The fact that they had once been shipmates in a destroyer could no longer save him. The pitcher had

gone too often to the well. All he could see was that lamentable procession of boats to the gangway of the *Toledo* in Zanzibar and a skipper exasperated until heat-apoplexy came near getting his number. The one hope, small and tenuous, lay in the fact that Captain Isham seemed to be strangely in control of a temper that was easily mislaid. But it might be construed as the calm before the storm.

Donnelly was almost stupefied when he heard the crisp voice say, as one friend to another:

'Sit down, you old fool, and have a cigar. Miss Fyffe-Harrison was right. A woman of unusual discrimination. And she knows you a great deal better than I do. I could never get the story out of you or Stackpole. And think what I might have missed. Hard luck in the dhow? Is that all there was to it?'

'Yes, sir. That Selim Majid went sour on us. He was the real poison ivy.'

The machinist's mate was sitting on the edge of a chair, holding the cigar as if it might explode in his fingers. The captain's steward, masking his amusement, offered a silver match-box. Captain Isham turned to his desk and took a letter from an envelope.

'Miss Fyffe-Harrison wrote this last night. She asked me to forward it to our Admiralty as she calls it. I shall send it to the Secretary of the Navy with a letter of my own. They will be filed with your records in the Bureau of Navigation, yours, Stackpole's, and Sprague's. Would you like to read what she says of you?'

What the Englishwoman might have to say was not so impressive as the captain's statement that he proposed to send a personal report to the Secretary of the Navy. This was a distinction not often bestowed. It usually meant a letter of commendation from the Secretary himself, to be read aloud in the presence of the ship's company mustered on deck.

Martin Donnelly read the woman's letter. His face was suffused with wondering emotion. Earnestly he protested:

'She never had foolish symptoms like this on board the dhow. She calls us heroes? And we were nothin' but three poor fish that overstayed our liberty. Huh, listen to this, will you? "*They were an honor to the service whose uniforms they wear. Had it not been for the unfaltering valor and resourcefulness of Martin Donnelly* . . ." Look here, sir, how did she get that way?'

'You appear to have delivered the goods. I should not call her a gushing person.'

'No, sir, she never slopped over once when I sailed with her. And we don't go on the punishment report?'

'Well, I don't see how I can commend you to the Department and soak you at the same time. There is a certain inconsistency about that. Of course you did raise seventeen kinds of hades in Zanzibar, but —'

'I asked you how did you square it, sir? That's what has made me miserable.'

'I couldn't produce you, could I? You had left

the ship — deserted, as far as could be found out. If the police were unable to find hide or hair of you in the island of Zanzibar, how could they expect me to? I washed my hands of you. That had to satisfy the *Spitfire* and the police department.'

'And the Bu-bu-bu Express?' timidly inquired Donnelly.

'I told the noisy Goanese chief clerk to send me a bill for locomotive hire. He could prove no damages. The bill was paid and charged against your pay accounts. I hope it keeps you broke for the next liberty port.'

'Yes, sir. It will. That leaves the Sultan's launch on the casualty list.'

'Well, I had luncheon with the British Resident at the club and found that he felt no love for your friend Azzan-bin-Hassin. A dissolute high-roller. After seeing the girl — what's her name? Zuleida? — my sympathy is with her. It was bust the launch and save the girl, as I see it. And if you had hauled down your colors, Donnelly, I should be thoroughly ashamed of you. The British Resident and I came to a friendly agreement to pass the buck to the Foreign Office and the State Department. The loss of the Sultan's launch was a matter for diplomats to handle. The damage was not inflicted by an American naval vessel, but by an American citizen very much on his own who had detached himself from the service. It will be all wound round with red-tape for a year or two. And if they catch up with you, then, it will be your own fault. Of course this is between

us. Officially I cannot approve of what you did to peaceful, beautiful Zanzibar where the cloves come from. My crew made an excellent record, barring you three hellions.'

'Two, sir. If Mr. Stackpole hadn't crashed into us, he would have played nothing wilder than chess. Is that all?'

'That will be all, Donnelly. But don't you do it again. Heroes like you are enough to disorganize any navy.'

XXXIV

THE shadows had lifted, the clouds rolled away. This was proclaimed by the dulcet tootle of the saxophone in the Jazz Babies' forecastle orchestra. Seaman William Sprague had made no mistake in joining the Navy to see the world. Never again would he be slack or careless on duty or talk back to a boatswain's mate. He had visions of promotion — a petty officer at the end of the cruise. As for missing a liberty boat, they would find him waiting on the beach. And again the compass needle swung true to the girl in Bridgeport.

Donnelly took it soberly. What gave him more solace than anything else was the conviction that the jinx was as dead as Judas Iscariot. The baleful influence had been finally evicted from his life. The evidence was beyond dispute. It was as logical as arithmetic. Henceforth misfortune and he would cease to be shipmates and brothers. There wasn't a superstitious hair in his head, but look how things had worked out!

First there was little Matheos who had been purchased as a mascot as well as a pet. At the time this had seemed to be a poor transaction, but Matheos had come through with the luck. If he had not flopped at the captain's feet and begged him to cut off his head, it would not have occurred to Miss Fyffe-Harrison that she ought to put in a word for

her comrades. This Donnelly learned from Mr. McCord, the chief carpenter. The next purchase made for reasons of luck had been the ebony elephant. What would the Japanese garden have been without him? Disgrace and humiliation instead of letters to the Secretary of the Navy. And there was the pup treasured by William Sprague as fairly riddled with luck. He had toed the scratch. What about the night when Selim Majid had tried to slip into the cabin through a stern window? What had saved them from getting knifed right then?

Yes, Donnelly felt absolutely sure that he could go ashore with no more disquietude or foreboding. It was worth all he had suffered. His soul expanded in a kind of large serenity. Freed of his own cares, he was in a mood to take over the cares of others. Everything was adjusted to his satisfaction excepting the problem of ways and means which seemed to confront Mr. Stackpole and Miss Fyffe-Harrison. This was the one flaw in an otherwise excellent universe. Donnelly gave it much thought. None of his business, but that motion picture had made him a romanticist. It continued to be diverting to fancy himself as the rich uncle from Alaska, the little tin god from the machine, the more so when he noted that Mr. Stackpole, emerging from the paymaster's office, seemed preoccupied and anxious. What else could it be than the problem of quitting the service and getting under way ashore?

In short, one hero felt a fond solicitude for a fellow hero who was still in rough water.

The *Toledo* steamed down the African coast, to a climate less enervating and among people more congenial than the Portuguese colonists. Durban was a city so substantial and civilized that it strongly reminded these American voyagers of home. South African hospitality welcomed the cruiser with open arms.

Martin Donnelly could look forward to a placid, uneventful liberty untroubled by a jinx, a prudent liberty withal for he had only a few dollars in his pocket. It had been Mr. Stackpole's duty as chief pay clerk to remind him that the Bu-bu-bu Express had to be paid for. Martin went ashore alone, avoiding a crowd of chief petty officers whose intentions were lavish. There were taxis and electric trams for leg-weary bluejackets, but Donnelly preferred to ride in a ricksha hauled by a strapping Zulu. He liked a fine, upstanding man. These Zulus were superb, a race of warriors now tamed who raised corn and cattle, or pulled rickshas through the streets of Durban.

Donnelly's Zulu wore a fantastic head-dress of polished buffalo horns, ostrich plumes, tufts from a lion's mane, and a band of leopard skin. His bronzed legs were adorned with white paint in decorative patterns. Proudly he trotted where the pavement was level or pranced between the shafts with the knee action of a blooded hackney when the ricksha rattled down a hill. Donnelly dubbed him Gus and yearned to carry him home to Bridgeport.

Finally they tarried at the shop of the African

Curio Company. Donnelly was no unsuspecting tourist to buy rubbish at random nor could he afford to be extravagant. His was an errand demanding thought and deliberation. Gus, the high-stepping Zulu, waited at the curb while the sailor inspected pottery, fans, boas, ox-hide shields, and broad-bladed spears. His attention was not really aroused until his eye was caught by a shelf of ostrich eggs which had been emptied and cleaned through a small hole in one end. The very bigness of them was sensational.

'The shell seems strong enough to stand a voyage,' said Martin to the shopkeeper, 'unless it may be the shock of a practice salvo. Then I can tuck the ostrich egg in my bunk, same as we do with the lookin'-glasses and such bric-a-brac. It's a present for my mother. She will want something from South Africa.'

Several of the ostrich eggs were painted in bright colors with bits of landscape which appealed to Donnelly's simple taste. He was no art critic. He selected one of these, a palm tree vividly green, a grass hut, a black native fishing in an outrigger canoe, a foreground of bright blue water. The picture accorded with his mother's ideas of what Africa was like, including as it did a sample of the benighted heathen whose souls her missionary money was helping to save.

Martin was a man of strong likes and dislikes. This was the one painted ostrich egg in the shop for him. It was precious in his sight, the only one with

this particular picture on it. He waved the curio merchant aside.

'This egg wins,' said he. 'The old lady will set and smile at it on the parlor mantelpiece. Now I don't feel so sad about losing my noble elephant. Wrap it in tissue paper and put it in a pasteboard box for me, if you please.'

Carefully packed in this manner, the ostrich egg was stowed in the bottom of the ricksha. The six-foot Zulu with the towering war-bonnet was warned to avoid collisions.

'You break that egg, Gus, and I'll just naturally have to crack your crust, as big as you are. I'm a man of peace sailing the world in a man-of-war until somebody threatens my souvenirs.'

This innocent afternoon had one drawback. The evening was bound to follow it, and Donnelly preferred not to think of the evening. He was staying ashore to attend an elaborate banquet at the Hotel Royal. In the ship's company were two score Elks, mostly chief petty officers and warrant officers. For several weeks they had been discussing and planning a fraternal celebration. It was to be the high spot of the cruise, staged regardless of cost, with the best of food and drink and professional entertainers. Martin Donnelly was a loyal Elk. He was also a hero. In a weak moment he had allowed the committee to put him down for a speech. Mr. McCord had blarneyed him into it. A frightful blunder, as the victim now began to perceive.

'Here is where I blow my boiler tubes and have

to be towed into port,' he grumbled as the ricksha turned in the direction of the hotel. 'I have my good points, but God never meant me for a spell-binder. Why, oh, why, did I fall for the chief carpenter's silly persuasions?'

A dismal figure, he sat on the hotel terrace until his brother Elks began to drift along. The spruce commander of the *Toledo* and his executive officer arrived as special guests of honor. They appreciated the courtesy as indicating the spirit that existed between the quarter-deck and the enlisted personnel. This increased the melancholia of Martin Donnelly. He followed the crowd into the private dining-room where an orchestra welcomed them with 'Strike Up the Band, Here Comes a Sailor.'

For Donnelly this grand evening was ruined. He glowered at the captain who was famed for wit and eloquence at the banquet table. And he, Donnelly, was supposed to make a speech in company like that. Stage fright took merciless hold of him. To fortify himself, he gulped down two glasses of Cape wine. They made his head buzz but left his courage as prostrate as ever.

He was horrified to discover that he had forgotten almost every bright remark that had been so laboriously memorized and rehearsed. To himself he muttered:

'What I need is fresh air and to get by myself for a few minutes.' He upheaved himself from his chair and lumbered from the room. Passing through the hotel lounge, he stood on the terrace and let the

breeze caress his beaded brow. He seemed to be coming out of the trance, but there was no hurry about returning to that place of torture. It was rank cowardice and he knew it.

There came sauntering past the hotel young William Sprague, carefree and blithe, his round white hat miraculously sticking to the back of his head. He appeared to be in search of company. Here was friendship and sympathy for the stricken orator who called out:

'Hey, Kid! On your way back to the ship?'

'Not yet. Why aren't you rubbing horns with the other Elks, Martin? Did they give you the bum's rush?'

'Come on up and set down a minute,' invited Donnelly. 'I don't feel just right. I had to come out for a little spell.'

The seaman climbed the terrace and dropped into a wicker chair. Never had he beheld his comrade as lugubrious as this.

'What was it, Martin? A bad oyster?'

'A speech has been wished on me, boy. Ain't that enough?'

'That explains it. They were afraid it would break up the party so they gave you the gate.'

'No, Kid. I had to collect my thoughts. I'm not due to go into action for an hour or so. Don't shove off and leave me all alone. Where have you been?'

'In what they call a club, about five minutes' walk from here. Nothing dressy, but no rough stuff.

I met a clerk in the Durban Town Hall or something and he asked me around to this joint of his. Three or four lads from my division were in there. These folks treated us right. The other gobs beat it to a band concert at the beach.'

'Just a little social dump? No speeches?' asked Donnelly.

'All free and easy — ward politicians, corner grocers, and so on — makes you homesick. Coats off, cribbage, and a billiard table.'

'That sounds good to me, Kid, for a half hour or so, until I get my second wind. This Elks' banquet has me sunk. And the walk will do me good. Maybe I'm coming down with this African malaria.'

'You can't bluff me. Completely rattled. I never did see you go dead on your feet before. Is this my old buddy from Zanzibar?'

'Not the same, Kid. Have a heart.'

The invalid stole into the hotel to rescue his hat from the check boy. On second thought, he took also the painted ostrich egg. This was a proper precaution. He might come back and possibly he might not. His condition was too serious for positive prediction. Convoyed by the faithful William he departed from the Hotel Royal and waived conversation.

'Pipe down, Kid, while I try to recollect some of the wise cracks I was all set to electrocute that audience with.'

They moved in silence until they came to a side street of small retail shops. In the second story of

one of these buildings were the rooms which beckoned as a harbor for mariners in distress. Behind the bar was a rotund, amiable man in a white jacket. Club members drank beer at little tables. The harrowed soul of Martin Donnelly found surcease. This reminded him of the Third Ward Democratic and Outing Club of Bridgeport. He could forget all questions of rank and etiquette. William introduced him to an alderman, a green-grocer, a haberdasher, a sunburned trader from Zululand, and the stolid master of a British tramp steamer. With a contented sigh he clasped a stone mug in his right hand and joined the talk.

Now and then he glanced at the clock on the wall. He was feeling so much more like himself that he resolved to cruise back to the hotel and look duty in the eye.

'I feel steadied down, Kid. Will you mind taking a souvenir aboard the ship for me? Handle with care, understand? It's the most beautiful ostrich egg in Durban. Something tells me the Elks may finish strong. Safety first.'

'Let me see it,' demanded William with the ardor of a bluejacket to whom curio hunting was a favorite pastime. The precious package had been left in the custody of the bartender who had laid it on a shelf among the bottles. Martin carefully removed the wrappings and revealed the huge egg with the African landscape painted on the smooth, ivory-tinted surface. The Kid expressed admiration. It was a swell picture, said he, and ought to knock

Donnelly's dear old mother cold. The nigger and the palm tree were simply elegant, and the blue water of the Indian Ocean would bring back to memory the shake-down cruise of *U.S.S. Toledo.*

XXXV

WILLIAM was about to return the egg to its pasteboard box when a stranger entered the room. He came in from the outer hall and stepped rapidly to the bar. He was short of breath, as though the stairs had been climbed in a hurry. A tall, florid man with wide shoulders, he looked like an athlete somewhat gone to seed. He carried too much flesh, with a bulge at the waistband. A flabby cheek beginning to mottle marred the pugnacious effect of a square chin. He was smartly dressed. A good tailor had turned out the gray suit. The Panama hat was finely woven. There was a flashy touch in the red tie, the shirt pattern, the gold band of the bamboo cane.

He lost no time in showing himself to be a breezy, affable person. The sight of the American naval uniform seemed to please him. He shook hands and insisted on buying drinks. An Englishman, by his accent, he had something to say about the splendid coöperation of the allied ships and sailors in the Great War. Blood was thicker than water. Hands across the sea, what, what? He had served as a captain in the South African Rifles. Parkinson was his name.

Martin Donnelly was polite but by no means effusive. This Captain Parkinson somehow failed to pass muster. He awakened a vague distrust, even as

a casual acquaintance. A rough-and-ready student of human nature, Donnelly suspected that the friendly Britisher was laboring under a strain. He poured himself a whacking peg of Scotch whiskey and tossed it down neat. This was oddly unlike the leisurely custom of his race. His hand was a trifle unsteady. His glance roved in a flickering scrutiny of the club rooms.

Upon the bar he had placed a package. Whatever it contained had been hastily wrapped in a crumpled newspaper with no twine to tie it together. Turning to the bartender he said:

'Can you find me a small box or a carton, Charlie? My luggage was sent down to the steamer a couple of hours ago. And there was no room for this curio without smashing the bally thing. I am sailing for Southampton in the morning. I picked this up for a young niece of mine in England.'

'I'll do my best, Captain Parkinson. What have you got there? Ah, I see. Some stiff cardboard and a little straw will do it up very nicely.'

The bartender pulled off the crumpled newspaper and disclosed an ostrich egg. Martin Donnelly stared and nudged his shipmate. Here was a coincidence, indeed, for on Captain Parkinson's egg was painted the same crude landscape of a palm tree, a grass hut, an African fishing from an outrigger canoe, and a splash of blue water.

'Where did you get yours?' asked Martin, intensely interested.

'In Johannesburg — saw it in a stationer's win-

dow and knew I'd have no time to go shoppin' about in Durban. I came down to-day and have been most infernally busy. Rather a gay old egg! A daub, of course, but a school-girl at home will fancy it, don't you think? I had to find her something.'

'You bet it's a good egg,' strongly replied the Yankee sailor. 'I found one precisely like it here in Durban. Show it to him, Kid.'

William Sprague exhibited Donnelly's treasured ostrich egg. They must have been turned out by the same artist. The paintings were identical. This so fascinated the machinist's mate that his important engagement at the Hotel Royal was shoved into the background. He felt kindlier toward Captain Parkinson. There was a bond between them. The Britisher drank another potent ration of Scotch. He appeared to need this kind of nourishment. It occurred to him to say to Seaman Sprague:

'By the way, I have a lot of things to do to-night. I wonder if you would mind leaving my ostrich egg at the Union Castle mail-boat when you go back to your own ship. Just give it to the man at the gangway and tell him to put it in my stateroom. Awfully good of you. Only a step out of your way. I may leave the silly egg somewhere while running about town, or get it smashed.'

William thought the request reasonable enough. A few more drinks and an ostrich egg might be a poor risk for the thirsty Captain Parkinson. And a man with various things on his mind might easily forget his curio. The Union Castle wharf was close to the quay where the *Toledo's* launches landed.

Captain Parkinson was cordially grateful. He took the cardboard and straw from the bartender's hands and made a fairly neat parcel for William to tuck under his arm.

'Now pack up my egg, Kid,' commanded Donnelly. 'And don't you bump either of 'em. I am due to join the benevolent Elks, God help me. I can sidestep it no longer. This reprieve has put heart into me.'

Captain Parkinson also felt compelled to attend to his own affairs. He would walk as far as the corner with them. They tarried at the bar for a farewell toast to the Stars and Stripes and the Old Red Ensign while the Kid busied himself with wrapping up Donnelly's ostrich egg. To emphasize his remarks, the Englishman swung his arm in a sweeping gesture. Unfortunately he jogged William's elbow. Donnelly's egg was not yet tucked in its box. It popped out of the loose tissue paper and rolled a few inches. William's fingers muffed it. The egg eluded him. It fell from the bar and struck the floor with a sharp 'spat,' flying into a dozen pieces. The painted shell was a devastated landscape.

Martin Donnelly gazed down at the fragments. His rugged features expressed more sorrow than anger. He said nothing. Words could never mend a tragedy like this. His first impressions had been sound. This Britisher with the red necktie was no good. Could it be that he was a jinx in disguise? No, this theory was dismissed. Martin's faith in a future secure and untroubled could not be shattered

as easily as an ostrich egg. He was the captain of his soul. In accents of the deepest regret Caqtain Parkinson exclaimed:

'So sorry, my dear old chap! Beastly awkward of me. Of course I'll pay for it. What did it cost you?'

'Four shillings, but that ain't it,' answered the stricken Donnelly. His black frown indicated a composure sorely tried. William read the weather signs. He felt uneasy. 'The *Toledo* sails at six o'clock tomorrow morning, Captain Parkinson, two hours ahead of your mail-boat. It's too late for me to buy another ostrich egg with a picture on it like that.'

'But your cruiser will stop at Cape Town, I'm told,' suggested Captain Parkinson. 'The curio shops carry this same sort of stuff.'

'That may be so, but I can't be dead sure of finding another egg painted with just that same combination,' obstinately pursued Martin Donnelly. 'I am a man that likes what he likes.'

The situation was embarrassing. It threatened to become acute. Without rudeness, but with a certain ponderous finality did Donnelly convey the verdict that money could neither heal his disappointment nor repay him for his loss. His own temper set on edge by an attitude so unreasonable, Captain Parkinson slapped four shillings on the bar and ripped out:

'You *are* a cross-grained blighter. There is the price of another egg. What more can I do?'

With this he picked up his own ostrich egg and made for the door. A large, compulsory hand reached

out and clamped itself upon his shoulder. He swayed under the weight of it and halted as though anchored.

'Before you call me names,' Donnelly rumbled in his ear, 'you and me will discuss this matter. Your steamer stops at Cape Town. Go ashore and get yourself another egg. It don't have to be the same picture painted on it, does it?'

'Oh, no, I'm not fussy about that. Take your hand off me. What do you mean? You want me to give you my egg?'

'Now you show sense, Captain Parkinson. That's fair enough. You busted my egg. How about it, Kid?'

As one true shipmate to another, William Sprague felt in honor bound to agree.

'If you won't be happy without that same picture, Martin, I guess you win. But, for Heaven's sake, don't start anything in this club.'

'Quiet and firm, Kid. That's me.' With a powerful effort, Captain Parkinson had wrenched himself free and stood with his ostrich egg guarded under one arm. His demeanor was that of the affronted gentleman who had entertained rowdies unawares. They were probably the worse for liquor. He refused to engage in an unseemly row with them. Regaining his suavity, he explained why he declined to accept Donnelly's ultimatum. He preferred to keep his own egg. It pleased his fancy. In refusing payment, wasn't the Yank making a cheerful ass of himself, now, really?

'Will you *please* come along, Martin?' implored the Kid, tugging at his comrade's sleeve. 'And be careful you don't crack *his* egg in the excitement. Then where do you get off?'

Donnelly harkened to this sensible advice. Moving aside, he permitted the annoyed Captain Parkinson to pass out of the club and down the staircase. Close behind him pounded the two bluejackets. Vainly the hunted Briton gazed up and down the little side street in search of a taxicab to waft him elsewhere. Confronting him on the pavement loomed the machinist's mate who was a man of one idea.

'Why don't you give me your ostrich egg, Captain Parkinson, and call it square? I don't like the way you behave.'

At this moment a stray ricksha, taking a short cut homeward, halted at the curb on the chance of picking up a stray fare. Captain Parkinson dodged and leaped for the providential vehicle. Into it he scrambled, shouting to the Zulu in the shafts to run like the devil. Before the ricksha could gather speed, however, Martin Donnelly had lunged forward to pluck Captain Parkinson from the cushion as one pulls a cabbage in a garden.

The ostrich egg slid undamaged into the bottom of the ricksha. The indignant Briton was hurled to his knees upon the pavement from which he rebounded.

'Run away from me, would you?' cried the offended Donnelly. 'Now we *will* have to argue it out.'

Seaman Sprague was a disapproving bystander. A cry of warning broke from his lips.

'Watch out, Martin. Better not egg him on.'

The inference that Captain Parkinson, late of the South African Rifles, had been a first-class man in his prime was quite correct. This he proceeded to demonstrate. His tactics were swift and unexpected. The blow that he aimed at Donnelly's chin went true to the mark. There were two hundred pounds of beef behind it. It jarred the husky sailor to the heels.

With a grunt he staggered forward to clinch. As he did so, he planted a fist in the stomach of Captain Parkinson, just above the belt. The recipient wheezily retreated, bumping into the ricksha. Such was his momentum that he fairly tumbled into it. This was the cue for the waiting Zulu who had been excitedly looking on. As if the thing had been neatly arranged, he snatched up the shafts and bounded away.

A slight down grade enabled him to pick up the pace like a sprinter. The ricksha spun around the nearest corner and vanished from view. It was a spectacular departure. Martin Donnelly was righteously disgusted. Still foggy from the impact with Captain Parkinson's bunch of knuckles, he stood nursing his chin. William Sprague was laughing heartily. This was better than vaudeville. He could hear the impassioned accents of Donnelly exhorting him:

'Go chase him, Kid. Pick up your feet. I can't

make knots enough. That sinful crook skiddoed with the ostrich egg that belongs to me.'

'Go get him yourself, Martin. I haven't lost any eggs. On the level, you ought to be locked up in a home for mind-feebles.'

'Glory, boy, look who's here,' yelped the gleeful Donnelly. Waving his arms, he galloped toward the corner. An empty ricksha was passing along the wider thoroughfare. It was drawn by a herculean Zulu distinguished by a gorgeous head-dress of buffalo horns, ostrich plumes, and leopard skin.

'Oh, you Gus,' roared Martin. 'My grand old speed king. Wait till I jump in. Then you overhaul that son-of-a-gun that just got away from me. There he goes. See him?'

The bronzed warrior grinned and nodded assent. He was off like a projectile, his plumes nodding to the cadence of his stride. These were two strong, determined men bent on pursuing the dastardly Captain Parkinson to the very end. The bewildered William Sprague gazed after them while he said to himself:

'I wish I had a grand-stand seat for this Zulu marathon. Parkinson didn't have more than a couple of hundred yards' start. And Martin's big boy had his cut-out open. Here goes another liberty party that meant well and hit the rocks.'

XXXVI

WILLIAM walked in the direction of the City Hall Square. Duty constrained him to follow in the wake of his stormy shipmate. Failing to discover a taxi, he halted beside a handsome limousine waiting in front of a residence. The chauffeur drowsed behind the wheel. William woke him up and scraped acquaintance. The story stirred the young man's sporting blood. He had been out to visit the *Toledo* earlier in the day. The crew had treated him royally. One good turn deserved another.

'This Donnelly may get himself in wrong with the police before he winds up,' explained William. 'Sober, but set in his ways like a mule. Get me?'

The chauffeur was willing to take a chance. He would not be missed for an hour or so. His people were playing bridge. He stepped on the gas. The limousine hummed after the two rickshas with a fine indifference to traffic regulations. The crafty Captain Parkinson must have doubled like a hare. There was never a sign of him or of the fateful machinist's mate behind his tireless Gus.

'We can find them,' said the chauffeur, slowing down to light a cigarette. 'If they go out Berea way, the hills will throw those Zulus into low gear. And if they turn back to the harbor, we can nip 'em at the docks. This Captain Parkinson may head for the Union Castle boat to dig himself in.'

'If he is wise, he will,' agreed William. 'But unless he gives up that ostrich egg, Donnelly may storm the ship and pull him out of his stateroom.'

They circled to pick up the trail. It seemed extraordinary that a large, angry bluejacket, careering in a ricksha, could have disappeared without making some commotion. To William the whole performance began to seem as uncanny as Zanzibar. The limousine rapidly traversed one shadowy street after another in the manner of a scout cruiser on patrol. At last William had to advance the theory that Donnelly might have murdered his victim and was hiding the body in some lonely spot.

Not long after this, the head-lights shone on a figure in white uniform which came limping down the middle of the road. It was in an area of lawns and hedges where the city wore a suburban air. The lagging pedestrian stepped aside to let the limousine pass. William's glad outcry made him halt. Martin Donnelly climbed in and relaxed upon the cushions. In one hand he gripped a painted ostrich egg, still unbroken. Carefully he laid it down beside him while he wiped the sweat and dust from his face.

A glimpse of this stalwart wayfarer sufficed to show that he was no longer spick-and-span. In fact, he bore the marks of a heavy engagement. A leg of his trousers was split to the knee. There were grass stains on his elbows. His starboard eye was discolored. To the eager questions he vouchsafed:

'For a rummy, this here Parkinson puts up one elegant scrap, believe me.'

'Did you trim him, Martin?'

'I am a modest man, Kid, but anyhow I came away with the ostrich egg. Will this high-toned bus of yours drive us down to the ship?'

The chauffeur was more than willing. He desired to hear the tale unfold.

'Too late for you to make your speech at the Elks' banquet,' said William. 'So that's off your chest.'

'I look like a guest and an orator,' remarked Donnelly, with no trace of anxiety. 'It will come out all right. Everything does. See how I was delivered from that speech. Always fair weather from now on. Well, it was this way. Parkinson's Zulu did a ninety-degree turn into somebody's garden. The idea was to run in behind the hedge and fool me before I made the corner. This Zulu race-horse of his jammed his helm over too hard and the ricksha turned turtle. Parkinson was spilled out on the turf, likewise the ostrich egg. It hadn't been properly secured in the cardboard box so it hopped out and rolled under a bush.

'I come bowlin' along with fires under all boilers and Gus steamin' as steady as a clock. I sight the abandoned ricksha where a gate opens through the hedge. Gus makes the turn like a certified pilot and sets his engines hard astern. We stop and I bounce out to renew the same old argument about the ostrich egg. Parkinson is on his hands and knees, gropin' about to find his egg. He surely does act mean and stubborn about it. It is pretty dark inside the hedge, but he sees me in motion and comes

up fast for a heavy man. Huh, I hate to go aboard ship with a black eye, Kid. It never did happen to me before.'

'I told you to leave him alone, Martin, but you wouldn't listen.'

'I had no time, Kid. Well, we waltzed around on the lawn and mixed it up with one another. After a while this Parkinson spits out a couple of teeth and feels a whole lot more reasonable. So I let him come up for air and he rambles off somewheres. While we had been swappin' broadsides, Gus had found the ostrich egg under the bush. The other Zulu tried to beat him to it, and so *they* went to war. Take it from me, they are ferocious folks. I pried Gus loose after a struggle. He was happily choking the other Zulu to death. Then I gathered up the ostrich egg and come away. Gus was too wore out to pull me another rod. And that's that.'

The victor yawned and stretched his legs. After a slight interruption, serenity again enfolded him. The obliging chauffeur dropped them at the quay and refused payment when Donnelly emptied his pockets. He had received his recompense in the coin of enjoyment. Sooner than wait for the next launch, and so invite critical comment, they went off to the cruiser in a shore boat. The gangway was brilliantly illuminated by a string of electric bulbs. Martin Donnelly ascended slowly. Captain Parkinson had kicked him on the shin. The officer of the deck scrutinized him with suspicion. He bore the marks of a disorderly liberty.

Conscious of this survey, the righteous machinist's mate was absorbed in framing an explanation to account for his need of repairs. Absent-minded and abashed, he had reached the uppermost platform of the gangway when he tripped and stumbled. To save himself he lurched against the rail. The ostrich egg was knocked from his grasp. It fell to the steel deck and was demolished.

Martin Donnelly uttered one deep curse. Then a sense of grief calmed the outburst. To the unsympathetic lieutenant he exclaimed:

'I went to some trouble to get it, sir. It was a souvenir for my mother.'

'You needn't try to pull any sob stuff on me,' was the brutal retort. 'What's the matter with you? Too drunk to stay on your feet?'

'Cold sober, sir, and heart-broke. I met with a little accident ashore, me and a ricksha and a man that didn't want to give me the egg.'

XXXVII

THE lieutenant was perplexed but inclined to give Donnelly the benefit of the doubt. It seemed cruel to press the point in the presence of such unmitigated woe. It was like the mournful dignity of a pall-bearer. There was no hint of liquor in such behavior as this. The bereaved one stooped to pick up the fragments of his painted landscape. Something astonished him. He held up between his fingers what appeared to be a little wad of soft paper. Others like it nested in the cup-like segments of the broken egg or were scattered on the deck.

Donnelly smoothed out the bit of paper, curious to examine the lump inside it. He displayed a rough pebble of about the size of a lima bean. It resembled quartz or dull glass.

'An uncut diamond!' ejaculated the lieutenant.

'*Now* what have I gone and done?' cried the bedazed Donnelly.

'Help me pick them up, you boob. Stand guard, Sprague. Keep this space clear.'

No sailors of the deck watch happened to be near them. On hands and knees they gathered up the wads of paper which were dropped into the officer's cap. Not all of them contained diamonds. Some of the paper had been rammed into the shell to fill it snugly. Having satisfied himself that no scraps had been overlooked, the lieutenant moved to a less pub-

lic part of the deck, followed by Sprague and Donnelly. They watched him winnow the diamonds in his cap while the breeze carried the loose bits of paper overside. It seemed like a conjurer's trick. They would not have been surprised to see him pull a rabbit out of the cap.

One by one the lieutenant counted the dull, irregularly shaped stones. There was a good handful of them. Several were as large as fifteen or twenty carats, in the rough. From this they dwindled to the size of peas.

'Stay here till I put them in the paymaster's safe and get his receipt,' said the lieutenant, who had his wits about him. This was more than could be claimed for Donnelly. He was mutely endeavoring to elucidate Captain Parkinson to himself. This was more difficult than putting the ostrich egg together again. William broke the silence with a perfectly obvious remark.

'No wonder he was such a sincere scrapper. He did his darndest to keep a rough-neck from running off with his fortune. You weren't the only man that knew what he wanted.'

'I can see just about that far into it, Kid. He knew the egg was loaded. But, listen, why did he ask you to carry it to the Union Castle boat? I feel dumber than usual.'

'He was scared pink and lost his nerve,' ventured William, whose ability to think had not been prostrated. 'He showed it when he came into the club. His game had been queered somehow and he had to

get out from under. He didn't dare carry those diamonds aboard the boat himself. I was the easy mark. Good camouflage. Nobody would suspect a young gob from the *Toledo* with a simple, honest face like mine.'

'I knew he was a crook,' said Donnelly. 'He ducked into the club to get under cover? That sounds like the dope. He told us he had sent his baggage aboard. If it was searched they wouldn't find anything. And he would be all clear if they frisked him when he went on the boat. Meanwhile you ramble along with a perfectly innocent ostrich egg. It was his one chance to get by and he took it.'

'But where does that leave you, Martin? My hunch is that Captain Parkinson will be afraid to go near the Union Castle wharf. He knows you have the goods on him. If he beats it off somewhere else without getting pinched, it looks like a tough job for you to explain to Captain Spencer B. Isham why you tried to sneak aboard this cruiser with all those diamonds stowed in an ostrich egg.'

'Please don't mention him, Kid. I wonder if he has mailed those letters to the Secretary of the Navy? Of course he'll confiscate the diamonds. I seem to be left with worse than nothin'.'

'He believed our alibi for Zanzibar.'

'It was a great strain on him, and Miss Fyffe-Harrison had to put it across for us. Now we have nobody to lend a hand. And this listens queer, like that did — two painted ostrich eggs and Gus, the Zulu bullet.'

The lieutenant returned from the paymaster's office and broke into the confidential discourse.

'Your plunder is properly taken care of, Donnelly. I will give the receipt to the captain. He will investigate this himself. Go and get cleaned up and stand by until he comes back from the Elks' blow-out. Turn in, Sprague. You will be called if required.'

Having changed into fresh clothes, Donnelly hovered within sight of the starboard gangway until nearly midnight. Then he saw the lights of the captain's gig move out from the quay. He was less perturbed than Kid Sprague had been. Circumstances had conspired to make his liberty in Durban tempestuous, but somewhere the sun was shining. The frown of fortune was only transient, like a thunder storm. Nothing could make him acknowledge that the omens were seriously unpropitious. The jinx had been buried at Mozambique.

Captain Isham and the executive officer mounted to the deck. The waiting lieutenant saluted them. They had dined well, although not unwisely, and were in genial humor. The captain noticed Martin Donnelly and beckoned him to say:

'What about that speech of yours? I saw you at the table early in the evening. Were you called back to the ship?'

'I expected to be there when my turn came, sir, but I had some emergency duty.'

This might have passed for an excuse, but that black eye was conspicuous.

'What's this? More Arabian nights? Who hit you?'

'A pretty good man, sir. It was strictly private, no reflections on the ship and the uniform.'

'None of my affair, then. You will have to make your report to your brother Elks. They spoke of tar and feathers.'

The officer of the deck called Captain Isham aside and imparted certain facts concerning diamonds and an ostrich egg. The captain's face hardened. Donnelly again! And more confusing and inexplicable than ever.

'I don't propose to hold the ship in *this* port to get things unsnarled. We sail at six in the morning. All I can do is to notify the authorities in Cape Town.'

Donnelly overheard this. He could see two lights, red and green, between the *Toledo* and the quay. It was not one of the ship's boats.

'Here they come,' he said to himself. 'Make room at the starboard gangway. The official calls have begun. I wish Captain Isham felt in better health.'

The officer of the deck just then reported:

'Boat coming off, sir.'

'I might have known it. I don't know who he is but I know why he comes. Send him to my room. And let Donnelly come along. It will save me the trouble of sending a messenger.'

Presently the officer of the deck punctiliously greeted a clean-cut, soldierly visitor who announced himself as Inspector Rickert of the Durban Department of Police. Yes, he would be that, thought the lieutenant. It was the natural aftermath of Donnelly ashore. The Inspector apologized for the hour

of his call. He was assured that Captain Isham expected him.

Donnelly went with them to the cabin, conscious of the Inspector's scrutiny. He was easily identified — a chief petty officer of powerful physique — black hair and eyes — tanned, forbidding features, a new, red scar on the cheek, with a strip of plaster crossing it. The Inspector looked rather pleased.

Not so with Captain Isham. He glared at Donnelly who lingered in the doorway, waiting to be called. Inspector Rickert said at once that he had no intention of hampering the ship or her commander. By way of preface he explained that the laws of the Union of South Africa strictly prohibited dealing in diamonds without a government license. Every stone had to be registered and its description recorded. The purpose of these restrictions was to discourage stealing from the mines. The penalties for evasion were severe, in flagrant cases several years in prison or at hard labor on the Cape Town breakwater. Illicit diamond buying, it was called — with the I.D.B. Police as a special force to suppress it.

This Captain Parkinson had been suspected for some time as engaged in it on a large scale, with confederates in Kimberley and Johannesburg. But he had been clever enough to keep the police on the run. He had once been an officer and gentleman, but had gone all wrong.

'We received a wire to-day to look out for him,' continued the Inspector. 'He was up to something. Somehow he must have got wind of it. In a funk he dashed into that club where Donnelly met him.'

'But how did you get on Donnelly's trail?' asked Captain Isham.

'Oh, we followed Parkinson to the club and learned that he had gone away with two American sailors. The bar-man gave us a good description of them. An hour later, Parkinson was picked up very much the worse for wear. He was wandering about, uncertain whether to try for the Union Castle boat or to leg it into the back country. He was in a state of mind. He said he had been half-murdered and robbed. He told us who had done it. That was a puzzler. Served him right, of course, but why should a decent American sailor want to chase him in a rickscha and maul the life out of him? The bar-man said there had been some words over an ostrich egg, but this didn't seem provocation enough.'

'And you found no diamonds on him or in his luggage?' came from Captain Isham.

'Not a stone. We put him in clink and perhaps we can wangle something out of him, but I doubt it. There is no evidence to bring him to trial.'

'You came aboard, then, to get Donnelly's end of the story, Inspector Rickert? And you can lay no charge against this Parkinson?'

'I am afraid not. I'm glad he got a hiding and I want to know what it was all about.'

Captain Isham and Martin Donnelly looked at each other in humorous understanding, as one good shipmate to another. Once more the clouds had rolled away as if dispelled by the wand of a kindly magician.

'So you got your man, Inspector,' said Donnelly, 'and he had no diamonds.'

'He was tipped off.'

'He was tipped up, wrong end to. I tipped him. You tell it, Captain Isham — God knows I have worried you enough this cruise. This is your merry little surprise party.'

'The diamonds are in the paymaster's safe,' laughed the captain, with boyish enjoyment. 'A nice haul, too. Donnelly brought them on board to be kept until called for.'

'You can't make an omelette without breakin' eggs,' wisely observed Donnelly.

Inspector Rickert was a man of poise. Slowly, earnestly, he exclaimed:

'I say! But how did you know he had them?'

'Yankee smartness. That's why I flew after him in a ricksha. It was my duty to fight for law and order. I always do.'

'Oh, I see. He hid them in the egg.'

'You are not so slow yourself,' said Donnelly.

'Have you any idea of the number and value of the diamonds?' asked the Inspector. 'At a guess?'

'At least fifty thousand dollars,' answered Captain Isham. 'This is the paymaster's estimate. He has been in South Africa before.'

'Well done, Donnelly,' Inspector Rickert exclaimed.

'It don't interest me, sir. All I have to show for it is a black eye and a ruined egg.'

'But you can count on a handsome reward.'

'A reward? How come?'

'The Diamond Syndicate will feel most generously disposed. Parkinson and his partners have cost them a pot of money. And it is important to put them out of business. In addition to that, there is an I.D.B. fund for the purpose.'

'No better speech than that was made at the Elks' banquet,' declared the hero. 'What will this reward amount to?'

'Oh, I should say a thousand pounds, at the least. It will be payable on conviction, but you will get it, through your Navy Department, about the time you return to the States. Your testimony can be taken at Cape Town.'

'A thousand pounds? Five thousand dollars?' cried Donnelly, in tones of profound disbelief. 'Is there that much money in the world?'

When, at length, he was permitted to retire from the cabin, he walked softly as though carrying something that might break. In this same quiet, cautious manner he walked all the way aft to the fan-tail where he could be alone with the stars. He would have said that he believed in fairies, had you asked him, just as he had accepted the phantom lady in the moonlight of Zanzibar. This shower of gold belonged in the same realm of unreality. Unreal, and yet entirely credible. By divers courses he had been led beyond the influences of the jinx, to where luck shone steady and clear as a harbor beacon.

The events, as he looked back on them, had been linked together in an inevitable sequence. How

could he have dreamed, when he went ashore in Zanzibar, that he should emerge from that experience as a hero, officially attested? And when he had sat, with fancy idly roving, and watched the melodrama of the frozen North unfold on the canvas screen abaft the funnels, how foolish, how childish, had seemed the notion of playing the benefactor to Mr. Stackpole and Miss Fyffe-Harrison, his staunch comrades of the Indian Ocean? A grown man should have been ashamed to toy with such delusions; and yet he had found the diamonds in the ostrich egg!

It was as though the gods of destiny were seeking to atone for all the past mischances decreed for Martin Donnelly.

This reward — a thousand pounds or more — was, in truth, like having a fortune drop from the sky. A fortune it appeared to a man whose own wants were few, whose tastes were unperverted by extravagance or dissipation. Nor did filial duty require that he should pour all this wealth into his mother's lap. A widow, she had been left very comfortably provided for by the elder Donnelly who had been a prosperous and estimable saloon-keeper of Bridgeport. Dutiful son that he was, Martin would buy her a diamond ring and tell her he had found it in an ostrich egg. This would leave the bulk of his fortune to be disposed of according to his own good pleasure.

He knew precisely what to do with it. A secret, and it must be kept a secret. At the proper time the paymaster would be a safe confidant. He would

know how to arrange the details of a mysterious benefaction. In Martin's heart was no hesitation. He felt in honor bound. It was a promise and an obligation, a compact made with himself. It satisfied his romantic aspirations and fulfilled his ideals of friendship. What else was money good for? And, less clearly defined, was the feeling that it was a thank-offering.

His hard, truculent features were illumined by an expression gentle and whimsical as he said to himself:

'It had to finish this way — no loose ends and all hands happy. And me as the rich uncle from Alaska! "*Wallah!*" "*Wallah!*" "*Wallah!*"'

THE END

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